PRIVATE EYE

No. 924
Friday
16 May '97

£1

NEW LABOUR NEW JOKES

How I Improved My Memory In One Evening

The Amazing Experience of Robert Heap

"Of *course* I place you! You're Bob Jones of Birmingham."

"If I remember correctly — and I *do* remember correctly — John Bagshaw, the supermarket man, introduced me to you at the dinner of the Bowls Club three years ago in October. I haven't laid eyes on you since. How is the motor business? How did the merger work out?"

The assurance of this speaker — in the crowded corridor of the Hotel Piccadilly compelled me to look at him, though it is not my habit to 'eavesdrop' even in a hotel reception.

"He is Dr. Bruno Furst, the most famous memory expert in the world," said my friend Bob Clark, answering my question before I could get it out. "He will show you a lot more wonderful things than that, before the evening is over."

And he did.

As we went into the banquet room the toast-master was introducing a long line of guests to Dr. Furst. I got in line, and when it came my turn, Dr. Furst asked, "What are your initials Mr. Heap, your occupation and telephone number?" Why he asked this, I learned later, when he picked out from the crowd the sixty men he had met two hours before and called each by name without a mistake. What's more, he named each man's occupation and telephone number.

I won't tell you all the other amazing things this man did except to tell how he called back, without a minute's hesitation, long lists of numbers, playing cards, prices, newspaper articles and anything else the guests gave him in rapid order.

* * *

When I met Dr. Furst he rather bowled me over by saying:

"There is nothing miraculous about my remembering anything I want to remember, whether it be names, faces, figures, facts, or something I have read.

"*You can do this as easily as I do.* Anyone with an average mind can learn quickly to do exactly the same things.

"My own memory," continued Bruno Furst, "was originally very faulty. On meeting a man I would forget his name in thirty seconds, while now there are probably over ten thousand men and women in the world, many of whom I have met only once, whose names I can recall instantly on meeting them."

"That is alright for you, Dr. Furst," I interrupted, "you have given years to it. But how about me?"

"Mr. Heap", he replied, "I can teach you the secret of a good memory in one evening. This is not a guess, because I have done it with thousands of pupils. In the first of twelve simple lessons which I have prepared for home study, I show you the basic principle of my whole system, and you will find it just like playing a fascinating game. I will prove it to you."

He didn't have to. His Course did; I got it the next day from his publishers.

When I tackled the first lesson, I suppose I was the most surprised man in the entire country to find I had learned — in about one hour — how to remember a list of one hundred words so that I could call them off forward and back without a single mistake.

That lesson *stuck*. So did the other eleven. Indeed, I was so impressed I introduced Dr. Furst's Course to this country.

Read this letter from Mr. J. W. Sullivan of London SW2:

"I feel I must drop you a line and let you know how pleased I am with your course.

"I used to be laughed at in the office here about my poor memory and I must admit with a lot of truth.

"Since I started your course my memory has improved out of all recognition.

"What is more the course is interesting and not tedious."

Mr. Sullivan didn't exaggerate.

Dr Bruno Furst's Course is fantastic! I can rely on my memory now. I can recall the name of anyone I have met before — and I keep getting better. I can remember any figures I wish. Telephone numbers come to mind instantly. What's more my concentration has improved.

The old fear of forgetting has vanished. I used to be 'scared stiff' of speaking — because I wasn't *sure*. I couldn't remember what I wanted to say.

Now I am sure of myself, confident, and relaxed when I get on my feet at the club, at a dinner, in a business meeting, or in any social gathering.

The most enjoyable part of it all is that I am now a good conversationalist — and I used to be as quiet as a lamb when I got into a crowd of people.

Now I can call up like a flash of lightning almost any fact I want. I used to think a 'hair trigger' memory belonged to the prodigy and genius. Now I see that every one of us has that kind of memory if we know how to make it work.

It's a wonderful thing, after groping around in the dark for so many years, to be able to switch on your mind and see instantly everything you want to remember.

What's more, I have become more popular and influential.

This Dr. Furst Course will do wonders in your work.

Since we took it up you never hear anyone in our office say "I think" or "It was about so much" or "I forgot" or "I can't remember" or "I must look up his name." Now they are right there with the answer like a shot.

Here is a letter from Mr. W. J. Heaney, a well-known journalist in Ireland:

"Thank you for the Memory and Concentration Course . . . I would like you to know that I have been captivated by it and now regret that I had not the good fortune to come upon it years ago.

"I am a journalist with both a multiplicity of interests and a voracious hunger for learning. This I tell you so that you will understand my need of a reliable memory and also the priceless value of the course to me.

"Dr. Furst I have come to regard as a multiple genius, and in 'You Can Remember!', I am astonished to find so much value for so small a fee."

My advice to you is don't wait another minute. Full details of Dr. Furst's amazing Course are available free on request. You will be astounded to learn what a wonderful memory you have got. Your dividends in both business and social advancement will be enormous.

ROBERT HEAP

Send No Money

Full details of Dr. Furst's easy-to-follow method for developing a powerful memory are contained in a free booklet entitled "Adventures in Memory". To obtain your copy, and further proof that Dr. Furst's system really works, merely post the coupon (you don't even need to stamp your envelope), or send your name and address to: Memory & Concentration Studies, (Dept. PYM57), FREEPOST 246, London WC1A 1BR.

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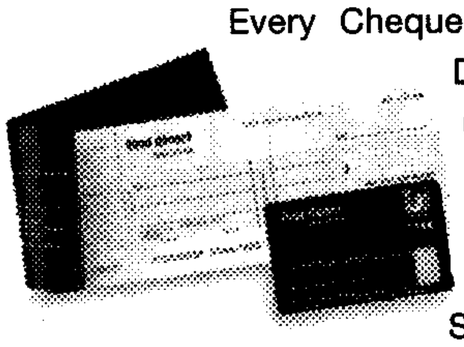

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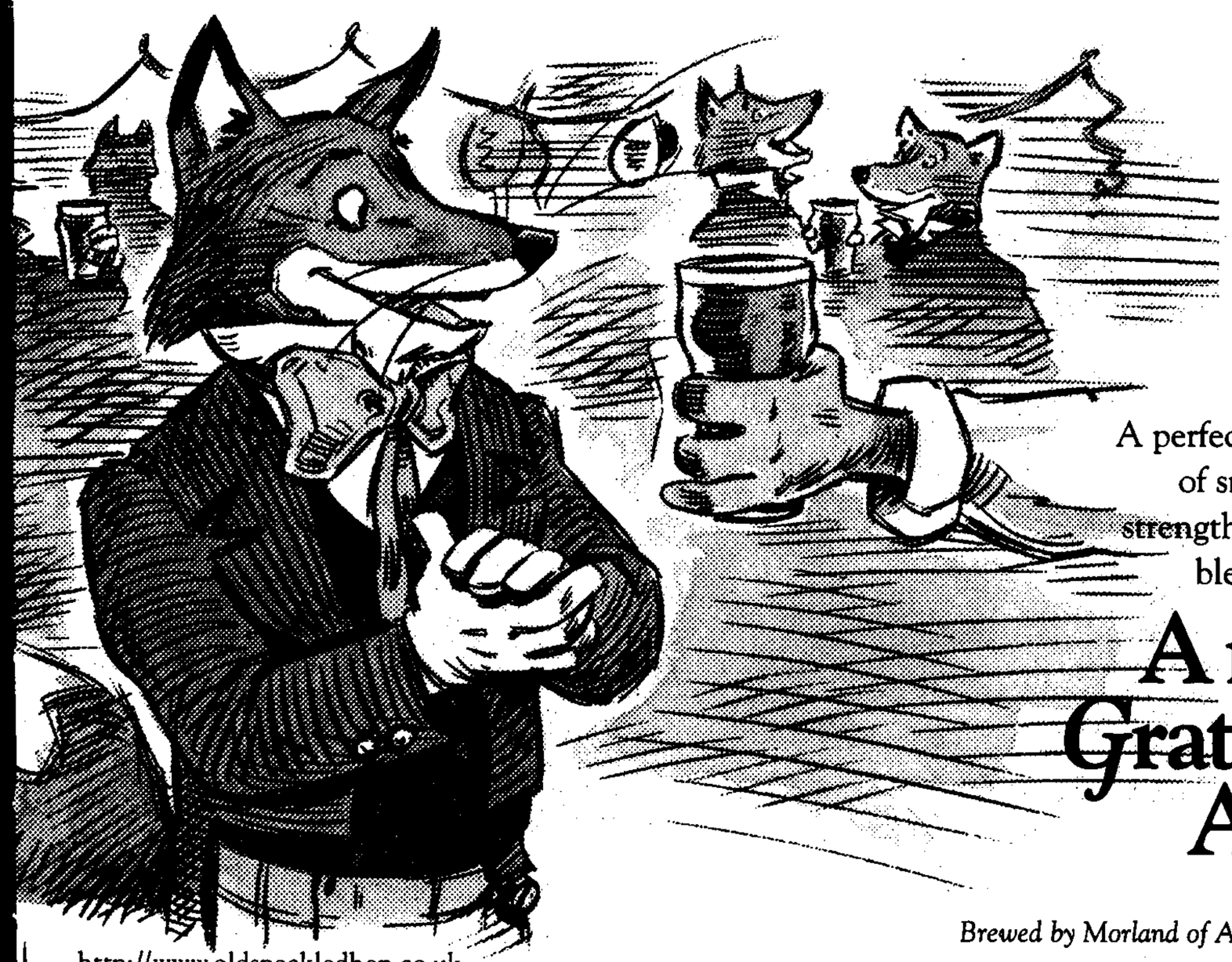

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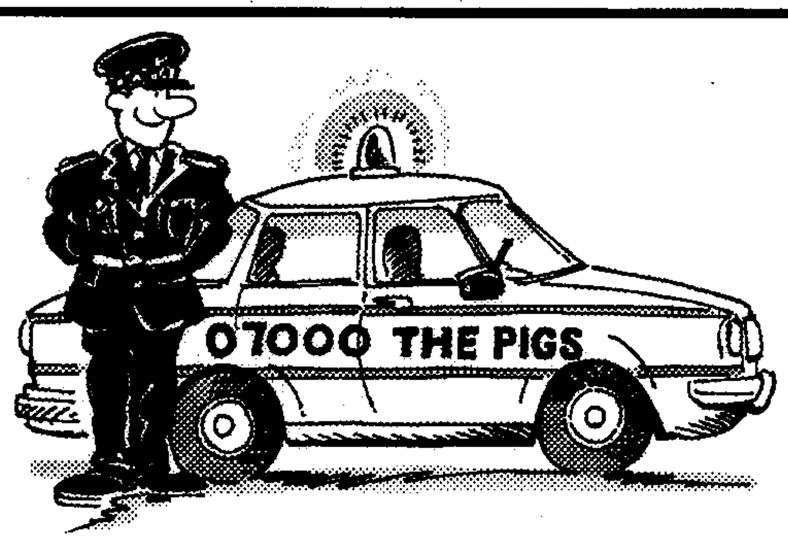

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TAKING my lead from the ever-resourceful BBC, I have decided to spend £5 million redesigning the Private Eye corporate logo.

The old dull logo used to look like this:

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PRIVATE EYE COLOUR SECTION

IN AN article written in *Gatelodge*, the prison officers' magazine, shadow home secretary Jack Straw wrote (April 97):

"I should like to take this opportunity to stress my fundamental objection to prisons run by the private sector. This is surely one area where there is no free market."

On Friday May 9 in the *Financial Times*, under the headline "Private prisons likely to increase", home secretary Jack Straw said: "I much prefer people to be incarcerated in state-run prisons but I accept the world is not as I wish." Just fancy that.

DAVID Simon, the genius from BP who has been appointed Minister in the Department of Trade and Industry, was the brains behind the biggest cock-up in the oil company's history — the sale in 1987 of £7.22bn worth of government shares.

It was the dawn, bliss was it to be alive, of the government's privatisation programme. Unfortunately, it all went wrong.

The market collapsed and Kuwait spent £1bn buying up the shares cheaply. It nearly took over the whole company. BP had to buy back its own shares with a loss of £400m. The man who master-minded that little coup was BP's finance director, er, David Simon.

He appeared at an enormously pompous press conference in the splendour of Lancaster House, along with Norman Lamont, then Financial Secretary to the Treasury.

The atmosphere was spoiled when an *Eye* correspondent asked how many years of oil were left in the North Sea. The platform was thrown into confusion. *Their* subject was money, not oil. They confessed they did not know. David Simon sent out to get the information and came back with a reassuring answer, that there was plenty of it about. BP's own *Statistical Review of World Energy* had just said that Britain's oil reserves would last only a further five-and-a-half years. That was 10 years ago.

Some nasty minds had thought that this was designed to encourage the government to sell off the company at a cut-price rate.

Simon is credited with saving BP when it went through a bad patch. He did it by halving the dividend, writing off £1bn worth of restructuring costs and assets, and sacking 60,000 staff.

He is now to be a minister in both the DTI and the Treasury. His main job will be to get Britain to adopt the European currency quickly. He may also be expected to undermine his Secretary of State, Margaret Beckett, and wind up in her job.

RUMOURS that the Downey report into MPs sleaze may not be published are premature. Leader of the House Ann Taylor wants it published. So does the clerk to the Standards Committee, Jim Hastings. So does Sir Gordon Downey. Lord Nolan has made it clear that he will publicly and angrily object if the Commons hide behind the technicality that all the MPs against whom allegations have been made (Hamilton, Smith, Brown, Maitland, Deva, Bowden, Lamont etc etc) have lost their seats.

Publication has been delayed by the absence of a Tory "shadow" leader of the House — Tony Newton sensationally lost his very safe seat in Essex. But the chief whip Alastair Goodlad has stepped into the breach and is not opposing publication. Look out for it in mid-June.

ONE of the first and most awkward decisions to be taken by the new president of the board of trade, Margaret Beckett, is certain to annoy one or other of Labour's new friends in the airlines. Richard Branson, in whose privatised trains Blair travelled in the week before polling day and who made a special journey to the Festival Hall to join Blair's victory celebrations, is strongly opposed to the proposed link between British Airways and American Airlines.

On the other hand, the strongest supporter of the link is Robert Ayling, BA's chief executive, another fervent Blairite. Ayling shared his 50th birthday celebrations last year with his old chum, Jack Straw, the new Home Secretary. And British Airways, by dint of anxious lobbying, have managed to exclude themselves from Labour's list of privatised industries due to pay a windfall tax.

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STREET OF SHAME

HACKWATCH SPECIAL

CRYSTAL BALLS

THROUGHOUT the election campaign, politicians and pundits agreed on one thing: the opinion polls couldn't be right. After all, they got it wrong in 1992, didn't they?

Indeed. But the pollsters' error five years ago was negligible compared with the spectacularly useless soothsaying of Fleet Street's finest during Election '97. Here is how the nation's most highly-paid hacks, columnists and leader-writers kept their readers informed:

"Mr Major needn't worry about the *Sun*'s conversion. With almost the entire press against him, Clem Attlee won the 1945 and 1951 elections." — Woodrow Wyatt ("The Voice of Reason"), *News of the World*, 23 March.

"NOW IT'S A REAL CONTEST. Major to attack Labour on young jobless as new poll shows Tories closing fast." — Front-page headline, the *Express*, 10 April.

"If the Tories can really remain coherent for enough minutes to play on the growing doubts the voters already have about Mr Blair, they are in with a chance." — Chris Buckland, the *Express*, 10 April.

"Major Scents Blood as Labour Licks Wounds" — Headline in *London Evening Standard*, 11 April.

"Labour is more likely to get a comfortable victory than a landslide... Polling data have to be set against precedent. The last time the Tories polled under 35 per cent of the vote was in 1859..." — Colin Rallings and Michael Thrasher, *Sunday Times*, 13 April.

"There is evidence that the Tory vote may hold up better than average in parts of the West Midlands... That is probably good news for the maverick Tory, Nick Budgen." — Colin Rallings and Michael Thrasher, *Sunday Times*, 13 April. (Budgen lost by more than 5,000 votes.)

"Tony Blair is New Labour's most precious asset. But is he also its greatest weakness? Senior party figures are now raising questions about his leadership, report David Wastell and Tom Baldwin." — *Sunday Telegraph*, 13 April.

"Labour Nosedives in New Poll" — Front-page headline in *Sunday Telegraph*, 13 April, reporting that Labour's lead is now "only" 16 per cent.

"Voters' Doubts Begin to Turn Tide for Tories" — Headline in *Sunday Telegraph*, 13 April.

"Martin Bell and media interference are resented by the tough Tatton Tories. So the despicable Hamilton will almost certainly win at Tatton. Then, if he's expelled from Parliament, it'll still be a Tory seat." — Woodrow Wyatt, *News of the World*, 20 April.

"As I talk to people who were determined Tony Blair voters, I find a lot of them are worrying. Should they risk it? I think the result will be far closer than the experts predict... Keep fighting, John. It ain't over yet!" — Michael Winner, *News of the World*, 20 April.

"Victory on May Day is by no means in the bag for Tony Blair, and there are no signs of the Labour landslide suggested by the opinion polls, according to a nationwide survey carried out by the *Independent*. With just days to go to polling day, the verdict from the doorsteps is that while Labour can still win with a working majority, people are swaying and John Major still has everything to play for." — Anthony Bevins, political editor of the *Independent*, 21 April, reporting the results of his "unscientific" straw poll of a few voters in half-a-dozen constituencies.

"LABOUR'S LEAD IN FREEFALL" — Front-page headline, the *Express*, 23 April.

"With only eight real campaigning days left, the Tories will take heart from polls, both public and private, showing that Labour's seemingly impregnable lead is markedly shrinking..." — Editorial in the *Express*, 23 April.

"An election which even the most cautious observer had concluded was all but won for Labour is now suddenly looking far more precarious." — Editorial in the *Guardian*, 23 April.

"Perhaps it is not too late for the Conservatives to win the election battle after all." — Paul Goodman, *Daily Telegraph*, 23 April.

"Mr Major has been telling friends that not only could he find it fun to be leader of the Opposition but he could stay on to fight another election, if only to make Tony Blair's life a misery. In his case revenge is a dish best served hot." — Chris Buckland, the *Express*, 24 April.

"Voters are treated [by Labour] with patronising condescension as if they were no better than baked beans in an advertising campaign. But in the next few days, New Labour may find there is more to the British voter than a can of beans." — Editorial in *Daily Mail*, 24 April.

"I am not expecting a landslide, partly because of the distribution of the Labour vote, partly because the shift towards the Conservatives is likely to become more marked as the poll nears." — Simon Heffer ("The Pundit The Politicians Dread"), *Daily Mail*, 26 April.

"The Referendum Party is running at 15 per cent in the south and south-west of England, and I don't give a damn what loaded polls say." — Taki, the *Spectator*, 26 April.

"I have been up country for a few days, forming an impression of how the campaign is going... I could not detect any sign of a Labour landslide... A Tory victory is still possible, though unlikely. But an overall Labour majority seems equally unlikely. At the time of writing, I do not believe that Mr Blair is on course to win the 57 seats he would need for an outright win. There could well be another election within a year..." — Bruce Anderson, the *Spectator*, 26 April.

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Unison magazine

"In the great Maastricht debate, Tony [Blair] and Labour's leaders opposed our opt-outs from the Social Chapter and the Single Currency. Luckily, honest John triumphed. Thanks to him, Blair would have freedom of action if he wins on 1 May — which he won't." — Woodrow Wyatt, *News of the World*, 27 April.

"Opinion polls in the past week have shown Labour leads varying from 21 per cent to as low as 5 per cent... One school will say that the 5 per cent lead recorded in the ICM poll can safely be dismissed as a 'rogue'... But what stands out is that, since 1945, voters have demonstrated a remarkable lack of political volatility... All this suggests that a Labour landslide is quite unlikely. Much more probable is a close result, perhaps even a hung parliament." — David Carlton, lecturer in politics at Warwick University, *Sunday Telegraph*, 27 April.

"The result of the last general election revealed the limitations of opinion research... The evidence on the ground is that the Conservatives are far closer to Labour than the polls suggest." — Editorial in *Daily Telegraph*, 28 April.

"Against all the pollsters, and chumps like the pornographic bestseller and disloyal Tory Edwina Currie, I do not believe Tony Blair will win by a landslide. On the contrary, I believe that John Major, who has fought brilliantly, is on course for a majority of around 30-40." — Woodrow Wyatt, *The Times*, 29 April.

"I am willing to bet — at the risk of much egg on face on Friday morning — that there will, at least, not be a Labour landslide." — Janet Daley, *Daily Telegraph*, 29 April.

"Come this Thursday, he [Michael Portillo] said, he expected the opinion pollsters and all those other critics who are counting out the Prime Minister's career to eat that most nourishing of diets, 'their own words'. If by some chance, however, the opinion polls have got it right for once, then John Major's future will be behind him by Friday morning — and Michael Portillo will have everything to play for. I wished Portillo the best of luck on Thursday. And, if it comes to that, on Friday too. 'It will be all right,' he replied." — Ross Benson, the *Express*, 30 April.

"Tory campaign chiefs hope that a silent minority of up to four million voters will rally to Mr Major tomorrow... Dismissing pollsters' predictions of a Labour landslide as 'clueless', the deputy prime minister insisted his party was heading for an unprecedented fifth term with a Commons majority of '60 and nudging up'." — *Daily Mail*, 30 April.

"Michael Portillo is fast emerging as favourite to succeed John Major if the Tories are defeated today." — *Daily Mail*, 1 May.

"Bank of England governor Eddie George faces the sack if Tony Blair wins power, Labour insiders said last night. He would be the first victim of Gordon Brown's determination to 'purge the establishment' and put his own stamp on economic management... Mr Brown is clearly intent on cutting the power of the governor." — *Daily Mail*, 1 May.

"The opinion polls are measuring dislike of the government, not voting intention, and Labour has failed to enthuse people. There's still a mathematical mountain to climb for them to win a majority, and they won't make it. A hung parliament." — Peter Hitchens (assistant editor of the *Daily Express*), *London Evening Standard*, 1 May.

"There is also a contradiction between the polls and the canvassing returns. I think that Labour canvassers are telling the truth when they say that they expect to win but not by a landslide. I know from family experience on the ground, and from a number of telephone calls, that the Tory canvass across the country shows the same thing: a Labour victory, but not a landslide... It will be strange if there is a landslide." — William Rees-Mogg (aka Mystic Mogg), *The Times*, 1 May.

"Not a surprise, though a somewhat greater avalanche than I had expected..." — William Rees-Mogg, *The Times*, 2 May.

"For the last six weeks we have been looking at a 180-seat Commons majority for New Labour. Politicians do not believe it, pundits do not believe it, even pollsters — whose polls have been pointing to such a result — do not believe it." — Sarah Whitebloom, the *Spectator*, 3 May. (The issue went to press on the eve of polling day.)

"There have been two election campaigns over the past six weeks. The first is the one recorded in the polls... But there is also the campaign on the doorstep... That is why the outcome is still in doubt, even though there are only hours to go before the polling booths open." — Bruce Anderson, the *Spectator*, 3 May.

"Mr Blair has the immediate question of more serious appointments... There are strong rumours, for example, that he proposes to fire Eddie George, the governor of the Bank of England..." — Simon Heffer, *Daily Mail*, 3 May.

"Who'll win the Tory leadership?... The Tote, of which I'm still chairman until 30 June, advised by me, offers these odds: Clarke 11-4, Heseltine 3-1..." — Woodrow Wyatt, *News of the World*, 4 May — the day after Heseltine announced that he wouldn't be standing.

"A great victory for Goldsmith." — Taki's verdict on the result in Putney, where Sir Jams lost his deposit, *Sunday Times*, 4 May.

AND FINALLY...

"I was wrong." — Bruce Anderson, the *Spectator*, 10 May.

Le leader travailliste Tony Blair, son épouse Norma, et leurs trois enfants, attendent le verdict des urnes avant de crier victoire.

L'Écho

THE *Financial Times* **showed its customary fearlessness when reviewing** *Blood Money*, **the new book in which Tom Bower exposes Switzerland's profitable wartime collaboration with the Nazis and the Swiss banks' plunder of Jewish bank deposits.**

Initially the book was sent to Neville Wylie, a Cambridge don and Swiss expert, who wrote a very favourable review. Terrified of losing lucrative advertising revenue from Swiss banks, insurance companies and industries, the *FT* hastily spiked Wylie's piece and commissioned a review from the paper's Zurich correspondent, William Hall.

While Bower was visiting Switzerland two weeks ago, Hall travelled to Berne to meet him and compliment him on the book. But when Hall's masters in London asked him to review it, the timid hack obligingly produced a hatchet-job — thus ensuring continued friendly relations between the *FT* and the Gnomes of Zurich.

The clinching point in Hall's article was the postponement of a 200-page historians' report on Swiss dishonesty, which was being prepared for President Clinton by US commerce secretary Stuart Eizenstat. "It is no wonder the the current US administration keeps delaying the publication," Hall sneered, implying that it would prove Switzerland's innocence.

Alas! If only *FT* executives bothered to keep up with the news, they would have noticed that the Eizenstat report was published four days before Hall's review appeared — and that it upheld all Bower's accusations against the Swiss.

THE overwhelming press failure of Election '97 must be adjudged the *Express*' **rotweiller, Peter "Cap'n Bonkers" Hitchens. Early in the campaign, editor Richard "Monk" Addis announced at morning conference: "Peter's mission is to get Blair."**

Since the result, colleagues report "Bonkers" has been inconsolable, his life's mission in ashes. But the fate of his "editor" is in even greater doubt.

For the pre-election edition of the *Sunday Express*, Addis faxed his editorial to his two bosses: the right-wing chairman, Lord Stevens, plus the real power at the paper, and its effective owner, socialist peer Lord Hollick.

The first call came from Stevens, raging that the editorial was not pro-Tory enough. Even as Addis listened to these ravings, a call came on the other line: Lord Hollick, fulminating that the editorial was not Labour enough.

THE *Daily Mail*'s **ageing gossip columnist Nigel Pratt-Dumpster had a terrific scoop last Wednesday: "The motor-mad Marquess of Blandford has reacted with horror to reports that he is to become a disc jockey at the transvestite Soho niterie Madame JoJo's, and tells me, 'Don't be ridiculous — I know nothing about music and I haven't been near a night-club for a least a year.'"**

White knight Dumpster, righter of Fleet Street wrongs, ranted on in this vein for the entire length of his lead story, without once mentioning the offending organ which had "falsely accused" the dim aristocrat of plumbing such depths. Dumpster even revealed Blandford was "contemplating legal action".

So where had this fallacious farrago of a story originally appeared? Why, in the Dempster's *Mail* diary the previous Thursday, of course!

IN HIS Attrocious column for the *Sunday Times*, **Taki argues that David Mellor was wrong to denounce Jimmy Goldsmith on election night. "Actually, he should have attacked Annabel Goldsmith, Jemima and Zach. They are the ones who canvassed like mad and came up with the slogan 'ABM: Anyone But Mellor'. Printed on a very large toe. I don't think I've laughed harder than when Jemima and Zach waved that toe around. It called for a drink..."**

And drinks were duly had: "I drank half a bottle of whisky in five minutes and began to hallucinate."

This would explain a lot. For the ABM slogan was in fact devised by Michael Yardley, who ran in Putney as a "Sportsman's Alliance: Anything But Mellor" candidate, and canvassed with a seven-foot model of a big toe. If Taki was unable to tell the difference between the former army officer Yardley and the fragrant Jemima Goldsmith, he must have been very sozzled indeed.

HALLO! THE HEARTWARMING COLUMN

HALLO! ELECTION night: to Christopher's, frightfully fashionable "cafe" run by Sir Ian Gilmour's boy, where Canadian crank Conrad Black throws an opulent party to celebrate yet another Tory triumph. Alas, as the results come in, the mood grows ugly and there is nearly even an oubtreak of fisticuffs!

Isobel Goldsmith, Sir Jammy's oldest gel (her dark hair dyed blonde, like Jemima) chatted to a handsome youth, when an absurd middle-aged oaf called Taki suddenly barged him aside, glowering ferociously. "Is it to be karate?" demanded the youth, angrily — whereupon Isobel wisely whisked the paunchy Greek to safety.

When the Portillo result was announced, I turned to commiserate with Michael's chum, pushy "historian" Andrew Roberts, who for the first time in living memory was actually speechless. Was that a tear trickling down Andrew's cheek?

Finally, socialist peer Lord Hollick turned up and was promptly asked to leave. Wisely, like me, he did!

HALLO! POOR Peter Mandelson. The Minister without Portfolio has, unfairly, been fingered as the sycophant who sent those flowers to Cherie Blair at 6am the morning after the election, which ensured she was fetchingly pictured in her nightie.

Au contraire. This was, I understand, a "set up". Step forward Rupert Murdoch's lackeys at the *Sunset Times*!

HALLO! *THE BOOK world's bête noire Will Self gave a brief address to the adoring fans gathered at London Zoo for the launch of his latest novel, Great Apes. "This book is a satire without an object," he explained. "Think for yourself, cunts." This was greeted by rapturous applause, and nervous laughter. Afterwards an awestruck young man approached the great novelist to have his copy of the latest masterwork signed. "What you said was brilliant," he enthused. "Would you write that?" So Self obligingly scrawled: "Think for yourself, cunt. Will Self."*

"Central London Feng Shui Consultancy. Can I help you?"

HALLO! TRAGICALLY, the Princess of Wales endures fresh heartbreak after discovering the "secret engagement" contracted by her handsome confidante, royal hack Richard Kay (see *Eye* 922).

Richard had been very coy about his fiancee, snobbish *Times* hackette Emma Wilkins, for fear of offending the volatile Diana. She had loved her clandestine assignations in Richard's car where, parked in ill-lit backstreets, the Princess slipped him royal gossip, which Richard could then recycle as "scoops" in the *Daily Mail*. This has made the wretched hack's career.

Oh dear. Now Diana is refusing to return desperate Dick's phone calls!

Meanwhile her newfound love affair with that old bolshie rag, the *Mirror*, is having its teething troubles. Last week the tabloid splashed an "exclusive" across its front page: "THE TRUTH ABOUT MY BULIMIA". This was supposedly a confidential confession made to a group of 30 young bulimic gels in the fashionable south London private clinic, The Priory, and the Princess duly issued a denunciation of this "intrusion" through the Press Association. But in fact, so the awful types at the *Mirror* claim, the little minx was well aware of what the paper was planning — and was perfectly happy with it. Of course, she couldn't let the world and his wife know that...

> One option not requested was a wench — an absolute necessity in the field during the wet season — which will evidently not be crucial.
>
> *Phnom Penh Post*

HALLO! **FAREWELL then Sir John Junor, great Scot and ardent suitor. How fondly I recall that balmy summer day when he invited all his** *Sunday Express* **peons, including myself and Lady Olga Maitland, to a cricket match near his home in Godalming. When I complained of the heat, J.J. gallantly drove me back for a shower at his house. Imagine my surprise, upon stepping out, to see the red-faced son of the Manse waiting in nothing but his Y-fronts, and giving the cheery cry: "I'm ready for ye now, lassie!"**

We shall not see his like again (certainly not in the rotund form of Sir Jonah's protégé Peter McLie, who has, futilely, filched this novel chat-up technique).

'The Marquesa'

IN THE TEAROOM

DESPITE all that expensive private education, the Tory party is sometimes incredibly slow on the uptake. Why should it take the acid testimony of Anne Widdecombe to make them realise that Michael Howard is a sly, loathsome toad who would be a disastrous party leader? How long before they wake up to the realities that Stephen Dorrell is even greyer than Major, that Redwood and Clarke would fracture the party over Europe or that stammering, hand-wringing, ever-so-anxious Peter Lilley is just not built for decisive leadership.

After all, a Tory MP has only to stand in one place in the tearoom long enough and he'll be told all these things by canvassers for the various candidates. Howard's are the most reptilian. Already they're slagging off poor Doris Karloff. "Rantings of an embittered failure," they say. It's an unconsciously ironic echo of what Old Mendacity himself said in the chamber about Derek Lewis when he sacked him.

And inevitably, forked tongues are wagging about the boy Hague, especially when William comes into the tearoom with Alan Duncan in serene attendance. Perhaps the sooner William and the beautiful Ffion get hitched the better.

'Urquhart'

TONY Banks, the incoming Minister for Sport, has certainly hit the ground running. When a London Tonight reporter called him to offer congratulations on his cabinet appointment and request a filmed interview on his first day in office, a bewildered Banks replied: "Have you got a number for them? I don't know what I'm supposed to be doing. I don't even know where the fucking place is."

SCOTTISH youth has a new champion in the rotund shape of Tommy Graham, Labour MP for West Renfrewshire.

Tommy's popularity has become something of a byword north of the border ever since he gave a live TV interview with a lottery ticket stuck to his forehead. A rather corpulent fellow, he had pulled out a handkerchief to mop his sweaty brow under the studio lights, not realising his lottery ticket was in the same pocket. The interviewer courteously failed to point out that he was addressing the Scottish people with his chosen numbers plastered on his head.

For his general election campaign Tommy produced another exquisite blunder. In a letter to first time voters, he promised "BETTER EDUCATION" and "REDUCED CLASS SIZES": this after offering them a "unique oppertunity" to have their say, although their future "seems very bleek". Of course, if Labour got into power there would be a "Scottish Parliment".

IN the battle for supremacy in New Labour between the Blairies and the Brownies, the latter seem to be on top. With the reconstructed Margaret Beckett ensconced in Trade & Industry, other key Brown allies have moved into place at the Treasury (Alistair Darling, Helen Liddell and Dawn Primarolo), while the paymaster general of the *New Statesman*, millionaire MP Geoffrey Robinson, has become — Paymaster General. With Donald Dewar shifted off to the Scottish Office, another Brown — Nick Brown — has the unenviable task of Chief Whip to the massed ranks of Labour MPs. Brown junior is a formidable Brownie, and not to be crossed lightly.

Meanwhile other Brownies, such as Lord Haskel (now a minister in the Lords) and Lord Gregson, have formed a new "non-profit-making Trust to further the study of political economy". Based in Edinburgh, the new think-tank has the blessing of John Smith's widow and his former aide Murray Elder, and can be expected to churn out voluminous papers backing the Chancellor's excellent new economic thinking.

Cat Under Threat

ONE of the main allegations against Liz Davies, which helped to kick her out as prospective Labour candidate for Leeds North East, was that she had been connected with a left-wing magazine called *Labour Briefing*. Labour front-benchers were especially annoyed at being nominated for the title "Class Traitor of the Month" in a *Labour Briefing* column of that title. Davies was deposed by the national executive and the Leeds seat duly won from the Tories by Fabian Hamilton, whose chequered business career has not commended him to all the local Labour rank and file.

Another young man making his triumphant way to Westminster as a new Labour MP is John Cryer, who won Hornchurch from Tory Minister Robin Squire on a 15 per cent swing. Cryer is actually a former editor of the aforementioned *Labour Briefing*, and personally penned several of the more fascinating profiles in the popular series Class Traitor of the Month.

THERE ARE mutterings in Wales over the demotion of Rhodri Morgan, MP for Cardiff West, who for five years was deputy to shadow Welsh secretary Ron Davies. While Davies now sits at the cabinet table as master of the Principality, Morgan has been consigned to the back benches following a phone call from Tony Blair making it clear that the scourge of the quangos could forget any ideas of office.

Peter Hain, MP for Neath, has been preferred, leaving Morgan to fume quietly: "I'm not one of the Taliban militia of New Labour, as you might say".

Morgan is also out of tune with the leadership in that he is a vociferous opponent of the Cardiff Bay barrage, the most expensive dam in Britain, said to be essential in the development of the Welsh capital's rundown docks. The £100-million project was championed by Alun Michael MP (Cardiff South and Penarth), a prominent Blairite and Jack Straw's deputy at the home office.

THE NEW BOYS: 1
Stephen Twigg

THEY don't come much newer than Stephen Twigg (31) the fanatical Blairite and openly gay member for Enfield Southgate who gave his leader the ultimate prize — Michael Portillo's head — in an astonishing result that shocked the Conservative Party almost as much as it shocked the ambitious Twigg himself. For it wasn't quite meant to happen that way. Enfield Southgate was intended as a dry run for a safe seat next time around, but fell to him because most local Tories had been bussed into supposedly marginal seats, while the cocksure Portillo — already preening himself for the Tory leadership — had completely underestimated local fury at the flogging off of the delightful Conservative Association headquarters to McDonalds.

Twigg represents the advance guard of graduated ex student union political fixers, who learned their black arts "stitching up" Trots and each other for salaried union jobs. A graduate of Balliol College, and member of Oxford University Labour Club, Twigg later became president of that vipers' nest, otherwise known as the National Union of Students, which has been controlled for as long as anyone can remember by a self-perpetuating oligarchy anxious to do the bidding of successive Labour leaderships, even when it means caving into student loans instead of demanding handouts from the taxpayer. The only thing that unites him and fellow NUS groupies and New Labour MPs such as Lorna Fitzsimons (Rochdale) and Jim Murphy (Eastwood) is their adoration of Tony Blair and their utter contempt for the horny-handed sons and daughters of toil who built Old Labour.

Twigg's political career was founded even before university, though, when he was head boy of Southgate Comprehensive in 1984 and ran a vaguely left-wing school newspaper, *Pen & Ink*, under the watchful eye of headmaster Peter Targett (father of the *Observer*'s Jocelyn) who remembers him as "an absolute charmer, an excellent student, the sort of person who's always in school uniform" (!).

When the area's Tory MP, Sir Anthony Berry, was killed by the Brighton bomb, the young Twigglet organised a hustings at school for the by-election candidates. The Tory hopeful, Michael Portillo, refused to attend. However, following his election, Portillo made the mistake of attending a school speech-day, where he was confronted by an angry adolescent Twigg raging about the "NHS... miners' strike... Tory government's appalling record..." Twigg won a standing ovation. Portillo slunk away nursing a bruised ego.

After leaving student politics behind, Twigg surfaced in Islington in the early 1990s, causing consternation to the Fenian MP for the area, Jeremy Corbyn. He soon managed to be elected as a Labour councillor for the Sussex Ward, also represented by his friend and mentor, Margaret Hodge. That relationship blossomed, and Twigg became her "Parliamentary adviser". It also gave him time to become Chief Whip of the Labour Group, where he was instrumental in getting fellow "Twigglet", James Winston elected as the Labour candidate for Barnsbury Ward, home to the Labour leader. Winston has since been arrested and charged with housing benefit fraud (see *Eye passim*). Along with fellow "Twigglets", councillors Tal Michael and James Purnell, Twigg orchestrated a letter campaign against "Leftie" Liz Davies to the National Executive Committee, which ultimately led to her being dropped as Labour's candidate in Leeds. Twigg was careful to keep his moniker from any correspondence, thus saving him from the miserable experience that his fellow conspirators were forced to suffer at the hands of m'learned friends, who ordered them to withdraw most of their allegations and apologise.

Not content with dispatching Old Labour, Twigg then turned his attentions to newish, sort of Labour in the shape of Islington council leader, Alan Clinton, who he decided to challenge, only to lose by one vote. So confident had Twigg been that he had invited his cronies to a party before the vote took place.

A great sigh of relief went up from Islington Labour's exhausted ranks as Twigg exited first to a lobbying job, then to the general secretaryship of the Fabian Society, whose interview panel coincidentally including Barking MP, Margaret Hodge. Despite the fact that he takes no political prisoners, Twigg, touchingly is a member of Amnesty International. He is also a member of the currently fashionable Labour Campaign for Electoral Reform, although given the scale of Labour's win, his membership card may soon gather dust. "He is one to watch" said the *New Statesman*. Old Labour MPs would do better to watch their backs.

PLUS CA CHANGE — OR DEJA VU?

"IT IS the strength of our organisation and machine that will carry us through the difficult months ahead, and it is to the oiling and strengthening of this machine that I will devote much of my attention...It requires a genuine and heartfelt commitment to Conservative policies by those leading the campaign... 'DON'T BE VAGUE. VOTE FOR HAGUE'."

— Manifesto from William Hague, candidate for Political Action Officer in Oxford University Conservative Association, March 1980.

"We need over the next five years to build an organisation and a programme capable of carrying our message... We need a new brand of leadership..."

— Manifesto from William Hague MP, candidate for leader of the opposition, May 1997.

OLD LABOUR

Disturbing the fresh-faced image of Tony Blair's government are two very old lags indeed, whose past history scarcely qualifies them as representatives of "New Britain".

Step forward Lord Donoughue, junior minister of agriculture, and Helen Liddell MP, economic secretary at the Treasury — both of whom were senior colleagues of that well-known socialist Robert Maxwell.

Helen Liddell, who served as Maxwell's hatchet-woman in Scotland and Bulgaria, was renowned and feared for her ruthless devotion to his ambitions. Interestingly enough, she announced last weekend that her "first priority" was to sort out the scandal of personal pensions. Her old boss, of course, always argued that company pensions were far safer.

Donoughue, it will be recalled, sold himself with Larry Trachtenberg to Maxwell in 1987 as an investment expert for £436,000 per annum plus a rent-free home in Westminster. Donoughue became executive vice-chairman of London and Bishopsgate Investments (LBI), while Trachtenberg was a director.

By July 1991, when he began negotiations with Maxwell to resign from LBI, Donoughue had lost investors at First Tokyo Trust around £50 million. He had also failed to prevent Maxwell from slushing nearly £400 million worth of pension fund shares through LBI to the banks as collateral for private loans to the Maxwell family to prop up the bankrupt empire. Investigation revealed that LBI had become a vital instrument in the fat man's frauds.

While Trachtenberg stayed on with the Maxwell sons and was duly prosecuted with Kevin for fraud (and acquitted after choosing not to testify), Donoughue negotiated a lucrative exit — just three weeks before Cap'n Bob's death.

Fighting to keep his bankrupt enterprise afloat (*sic*), Maxwell bowed to the greedy peer's demands. Donoughue received £230,000 as a pay-off and an extra £50,000 in return for a signed promise not to reveal the secrets of Maxwell's empire — then already under siege by an army of bankers threatening to summon the Serious Fraud Office. However, Maxwell did resist one of Donoughue's more outrageous demands in return for his silence — that the Labour lord should be allowed to keep his house for nothing.

In the ensuing SFO investigation, Trachtenberg's signature as an LBI director was found on countless transfer forms. His role and that of his superior, Lord Donoughue, has been investigated by DTI inspectors, but their report has been mysteriously delayed. If and when it does finally surface, a copy will arrive on the desk of the economic secretary to the Treasury, Helen Liddell, who will no doubt find it interesting reading.

As, of course, will Lord Donoughue. Shortly before the election, Blair was personally warned that Lord D's association with the Maxwell pension funds would feature heavily in the DTI report; and yet he has still made room for this flea-ridden fat-cat in his new government. Can anyone explain why?

NEW WOMEN

Harriet Harman, Social Security Secretary and almost the top woman in the new government (after Margaret Beckett) is MP for Peckham. That is not good enough for her family, so she prefers to live next door in the posh constituency of Dulwich.

Dulwich is represented by Tessa Jowell, who also prefers not to live in her constituency; she resides on the other side of London, in Camden, as one of the Islington set. She is Health Minister (and not in the Cabinet).

Unusually, Harriet's home, which is usually ablaze at election time with exhortation to vote for the Labour candidate, this time carried only one sticker, two inches high, placed at the bottom of a ground floor window and almost invisible behind the bushes. It said "Vote Labour". No "Vote Jowell" poster was in evidence. Pourquoi? Harriet loathes Tessa and could not bear to have her name defacing her house.

The dislike goes back to the time when Harriet, who is ambitious beyond her ability, was opposition health spokeswoman. She was not a success. Tessa, pushy and ruthless, who had worked in the health service, considered that she knew more about it.

Now, in departments that are supposed to work closely together, they smile through clenched teeth at one another. Very traditional, very old Labour.

NEW TORIES

A SHAMEFUL secret has emerged that may damage John Redwood's chances of leading the Conservative Party. The *Eye* can reveal that in the late 1960s, the fledgling Vulcan was a bleeding-heart liberal; more embarrassingly still he wrote poetry.

Here is a sample of his verse:

I see myself as a quiet lake of mystery
Woven in nebulous mist
Foretelling a flood —
Of coloured happiness
While others build arks
To float misery.

This painful specimen of adolescent egotism appeared in a samizdat publication called *Exit 68*, which Redwood sold to fellow students at Kent College in 1968. His sales pitch is also worth reproducing:

"The proceeds of this issue of *Exit* are going to Shelter. At this moment three million families live in slums or grossly overcrowded housing conditions. A hard core of these have lived for so long in appalling conditions that they have been driven to the depth of despair and disease. Political action is essential. It would take ten years for political action to be effective. These families cannot wait ten years. *Cathy Come Home* did not exaggerate. Something must be done. Here is one way of acting."

OLD SLEAZE

More about the embarrassment caused to John Major by lobbyist Willie Nagel, who was so generous with meals and favours to Major's constituency agent Peter Brown (see last two *Eyes*).

Nagel's greatest triumph was his appointment to a trade mission to Israel and Jordan led by the Prime Minister in March 1995. When Major returned from the trip he was due to speak to Tory MPs in a House of Commons committee room about Britain's relations with the two countries. Before the meeting, however, there were unruly scenes as Mr Willie Nagel, who insisted on his right to attend, was evicted.

Major was intensely embarrassed and determined never again to accommodate the cloying lobbyist. When, some months later, Nagel sent Major and Norma a silver tray embossed with a grovelling message about Major's magnificent diplomatic achievements in Ireland, the gift was brusquely returned.

Mr Nagel has studied the election results and is now seeking to join the Labour Friends of Israel.

Cat Reprieved

Nine out of Number Ten owners prefer publicity

Will Tony Blair's enthusiasm for privatisation be as rampant as the last government's? One company keen to find out is *Eye* favourite EDS.

The giant computer services company popped up in Computer Weekly shortly before polling day to state that it intended to be apolitical from now on. Good timing considering that their multitude of government computer contracts will now come under the scrutiny of a new Labour administration.

Good timing also considering that any political links they have had in the past have been strictly Tory. First there was the friendship between their founder Ross Perot and Margaret Thatcher which got their ball rolling in the UK. Perot even allowed EDS offices to be hired out to Thatcher's son Mark.

Then there were the two Tory MPs with links to EDS. One, Michael Stephen, listed in the register of members' interests as advisor to EDS, lost his constituency through a boundary change.

The other is Nirj Deva, former MP for Brentford and Isleworth, who was a remunerated director of EDS's PR company. Mr Deva was swept from power last week by a swing of over 14 per cent to Labour but EDS could hardly have wished the connection to continue anyway. Mr Deva was under investigation by the Standards and Privileges Committee accused of accepting election campaign money from Ian Greer in 1987 and failing to declare it.

'Backbiter'

Noddy Goes to Europe

"It is time to end all this confrontation and work again with our old partners..."

"... the Trade Unions!"

TV

Teletubbies (BBC2)

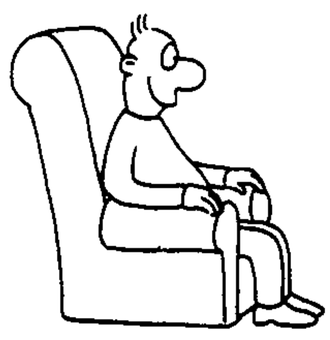
WHATEVER the makers of *Teletubbies* were on when they dreamt it up, it certainly wasn't Heinz baby food. As Loyd Grossman would say, consider the evidence. The Teletubbies (who appear at 10 o'clock, weekday mornings on BBC2, in the old *Playdays* slot) are four pastel creatures, generous of girth and thigh, who live in a hole in — could it be anywhere else? — Teletubbyland.

Every morning they emerge from this hole to run about at high speed (in a formation fans of Benny Hill may recognise), eat Tubby Toast in their grass-covered igloo and engage in adventures which generally involve such complex plotlines as hats falling off and being put back on again — accurately reflecting the entertainment preferences and attention spans of the under-5s and university students who tune in on a daily basis.

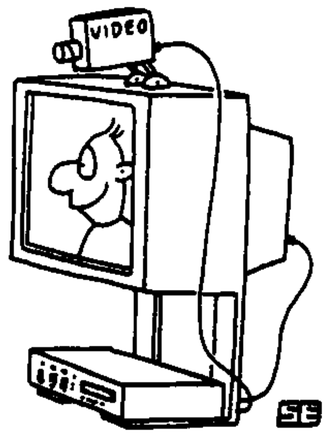
Who are these Teletubbies? Tinkywinky, Dipsy, Lala and Po (as unfortunate a name, in its way, as Brian Cant) are variously coloured and variously sized, with TV screens on their tubby tummies and TV aerials growing out of their heads. Po, we have recently established, is a girl; the sexes of the others remain a mystery. It is possible that Tinkywinky and Dipsy are the parents, for they are larger than Lala and Po, but there's no way of knowing.

Certainly their lives are not entirely their own, for they are watched at all times by sinister farting periscopes, which rise out of the grass at random and say things like "Where have the Teletubbies gone?". When the periscopes say it's "Time for Tubby Bye Bye", none of them argues.

Modern-Day Narcissus



Fortunately the Great Windmill is on hand to provide pleasure, enlightenment and much needed contact with the outside world. This vast construction is essentially a giant version of those little plastic windmills all children used to own: when it cranks into action, it spurts a psychedelic shower of colour and light like an electromagnetic catherine wheel. This is good news for the Teletubbies, who instantly run out into the garden and start gurgling with unseemly pleasure. As they pick up the signal on their aerials, they grab their haunches, moan slightly and roll their eyes up into their foreheads: hard-hitting documentaries on heroin addiction are rarely this explicit. One lucky Tubby will be the chosen conduit for the signal, which will generally be a short film of small children playing. At the end of the film the children will wave bye bye, the Teletubbies will plead "Again!", and the film will then be repeated in its entirety. We have come a long way from square, round and arched windows.



After a while, of course, you are actively looking for evidence of pharmaceutical enhancement. When Dipsy lost her/his hat last Tuesday, Tinkywinky found it, but instead of picking it up, just ran round it shouting "Dipsy's hat" over and over again — behaviour consistent with the known effects of long-term drug use. Inside the igloo lives a dog with a hoover nozzle for a nose — perhaps it had previously worked in advertising.

'Couch Potato'

O·B·N

She [Anthea Turner] has become a broadcaster of genius...

TONY PARSONS
Daily Mirror

Ruby Wax is probably the country's most under-estimated film-maker... She has one of the smartest and quickest brains in the business, and if her critics had the nous to look beyond what they believe is a shallow, brash American personality, they would recognise a person of outstanding intellect and immense, wide-ranging gifts.

JACI STEPHEN
Daily Mirror

Submitted by F.H.

£10 paid for all entries put forward for the Order of the Brown Nose.

I-BSkyB

America's top sitcom [Seinfeld] remains the mustest-see of Sky One's Must-See Thursday.

GARRY BUSHELL
Sun

CONTRIBUTOR: F.H.

An occasional column for which readers are invited to submit Sky-plugs masquerading as news items in Murdoch papers. The usual £10 will be paid.

MEDIA NEWS

MUCH of the regime of "permanent revolution" at the BBC is justified by claims that the money saved — apart from paying for loads of consultants' reports — will be used to start a series of new subscription channels which will in turn yield vast profits to augment the licence fee.

Hopes are highest for two channels: a visual version of Radio One and the long threatened 24-hour news channel. Both services are apparently destined to sweep the civilised world — and America (although the corporation's much vaunted cable deal there is always being "negotiated", without any clear launch date emerging).

But Radio One has virtually no transatlantic appeal and, to judge by the latest ratings drop, precious little here at home.

The new video service, by contrast, will go head to head with established cable and satellite competitors like MTV, VHI and Music Box as well as a host of individual rock shows on terrestrial stations. No wonder there are rumours that One-tv's launch will soon be cancelled (although naturally a face-saving announcement will claim a temporary postponement to allow for more detailed planning).

The budget for the proposed music station is small, however, compared to the vast sum that John Birt is prepared to spend on his longed-for rolling news service. Claims that there aren't enough potential viewers and that a 24-hour news channel will cannibalise the existing news and current affairs output have been dismissed by Birt's allies, who point to the amazing success of Ted Turner's CNN.

But figures leaked to the *Washington Post* reveal that, although 71.7 million homes in America can view CNN, only 371,000 watched in any 24-hour period during January and February this year.

Two rival news services did even worse. MSNBC, a joint venture by the over-promoted Bill Gates and one of the main American networks, averaged around 30,000 viewing households on any given day, out of a potential 32.5 million homes. And Rupert Murdoch's Fox News, available to 21 million American homes, was watched in only 12,000 on an average day.

At least Turner, Gates and (until the next major stock market correction) Murdoch can afford vanity news services. Birt's dream that huge numbers of Yanks want to watch Peter Sissons is likely to bankrupt the BBC.

T·F·I friday
I'VE BEEN ACCUSED OF EXPLOITING SAD, DIM INADEQUATES!
BUT I'VE DENIED IT!
AS THEY CAN ALWAYS SWITCH OFF!
UGLY PERSONALITY
Kurt Pyrac

UNDER Birt's barmy restructuring the cosy world of Radio 4 has been set on its ear. Anxious staff are keeping a particularly close eye on *Woman's Hour*, to see how it fares under new controller James Boyle, Michael Green's successor. As an old favourite with listeners, it should provide a reliable barometer to the new regime.

Previously the programme was threatened with a move to the morning and then, even worse, a change of name. Sally Feldman, then editor, managed to stop the name change but soon after was asked to reapply for her own job.

Management had decided that individual editors were no longer required for *Woman's Hour* or *Afternoon Shift* and that one managing editor could do the two full-time jobs just as well.

Feldman, along with other editors, was invited to apply, but she was unsuccessful — nothing to do with her strenuous opposition to changes to the programme of course.

So far, the only new signals coming from the Boyle management are that *Woman's Hour* must be made more attractive to men. Thus a report that had been planned on how a sharp increase in the number of women MPs will affect women had to be changed to reflect how a sharp increase in the number of women MPs will affect, er, everybody. Perhaps *Everybody's Hour* would be an appropriate new title.

SCIENTISTS, and the factually-minded in general, were astounded to see *Newsnight* pick up the BAFTA Best News award for its BSE coverage. A prominent example of this coverage was a report broadcast on 7 May 1996 in which journalist Susan Watts got access to the hospital room of CJD victim Vicky Rimmer and filmed an exclusive interview with Professor John Collinge of the Prion Diseases Group.

There were only two small flaws in this hard-hitting reportage. The first was that Rimmer has not been confirmed as a new variant CJD case. The second was that Professor Collinge, who insisted in his interview that the public should not place too much hope in his work with transgenic mice (they had not contracted new variant CJD from BSE inoculate), failed to mention that the public's hopes had been raised in the first place by Wellcome Trust press releases (approved by the professor) stressing the significance of his experiments in December 1995.

Seven months later it turned out that the new variant CJD victims were of a different genotype than the transgenic mice so the experiment didn't have the importance Wellcome had implied. Or, according to Collinge, the press had over-interpreted its importance.

This was also the same *Newsnight* episode in which Susan Watts crept around the Corsellis Brain Bank in Essex with the lights inexplicably turned off. As she found her way round by torchlight she explained that BSE and CJD were prion diseases.

The brains looked spooky in the dark but her address was pure conjecture. The prion theory is one of many hypotheses, which might not be the most sound but is certainly the most fashionable.

Professor Collinge, however, seems to sense that it may be discredited soon. He has renamed his Prion Diseases Group the "Neurogenetics Unit".

WORLD OF HYPE

SUICIDAL chums at Tory Central Office regale me with a sad tale of Lord Saatchi and Sir Tim Bell, the two greatest PR spivs who ever lived. In the last weeks before the election, Saatchi and Bell, knowing perfectly well the game was up, spent most of their time brown-nosing the two men they reckoned the most likely contenders for the role of next leader of the Tory Party.

And upon whom did these great political tipsters fawn? Why, Hezza and Portillo, of course — proving, conclusively, that there can be justice on earth, after all!

NOOKS and CORNERS

IT IS rather cheering when the Church of England can be made to do the right thing and even look after its buildings — as with St Ethelburga's, Bishopsgate (*Eyes passim*). For the long-running story of this building now seems at last to be moving towards a happy ending. Readers will recall how this small and most special mediaeval church in the City of London was half blown to bits by an IRA bomb in April 1993. The immediate reaction of the Diocese of London was, of course, to clear and redevelop the site. Then, when public opinion suggested that anything but restoration would grant a victory to terrorism, it promoted a terrible half-modern scheme by Blee Ettwein Bridges — that is, by our old friend and distinguished Freemason, Anthony 'Twee' Blee (*Eyes passim ad nauseam*). To this, the City Corporation rightly refused planning permission and listed building consent last year.

Now, at last, the new Bishop of London, Richard Chartres, seems to have seen sense and is prepared to do the decent thing by St Ethelburga's. The plan is to recreate the church as a "Centre for Reconciliation and Peace" by using as much of the surviving fabric as possible. The new centre will incorporate a sanctuary and a memorial garden, and "the rebuilding programme will be undertaken in a manner that respects the historical significance of the church and provides it with an imaginative and purposeful future". As the valiant Friends of St Ethelburga point out, the restoration scheme by Rothermel Thomas and Richard Griffiths which they submitted in the (perverted) competition held in 1995 is completely compatible with what the Bishop of London is now proposing. It ought to be adopted.

An appeal will be launched later this year for the rebuilding of St Ethelburga's. What little work has so far been done to look after the ruins has been funded by the City Corporation and English Heritage — which was very good of them given the absence of £¼ million "for the upkeep and repair of St Ethelburga's" which should have been found in the Kitchin Charity of the Saddlers' Company, accumulated from the legacy of one Robert Kitchin (died 1555).

So where has that money gone? Why, to the happy-clappy well-heeled youthful congregation of St Helen's, Bishopsgate, to which St Ethelburga's was briefly a chapel-of-ease between March 1992 and June 1994. This useful transfer of funds was apparently approved by the Chief Charity Commissioner. Perhaps he might like to explain why? After all, that money could now be used for the purpose for which it was bequeathed.

NEWS REACHES me of an exciting modern scheme for one of two blocks in Kensal Green to house some 280 students hailing from something called the University of Westminster. It is designed by APT — "Architects, Planning, Technology" — who propose a dynamic grid of glazing articulated by a brick-clad concrete frame. Particularly striking is the dramatic change in scale between these new hostels and an old Victorian pub — The Mason's Arms — for these new buildings are seven storeys in height when almost all around rises to a mere three.

Why so tall? Because the new buildings are to be fitted on a narrow strip of land between the Harrow Road and Kensal Green Cemetery. Unfortunately, many local people think that two long seven-storey blocks directly overlooking Kensal Green Cemetery will somehow destroy the amenity of one of the most famous of 19th century burial grounds. After all, the former West London Cemetery contains magnificent tombs for two of George III's children, the Duke of Sussex and Princess Sophia, amongst others — and, in recent years, has been greatly enhanced with funds from English Heritage, the London Wildlife Trust, and others. But a cemetery, surely, is only inhabited by the dead: why should they worry if the view is blocked and they are overlooked by students with their radios blaring all day and all night?

The cemetery is a Conservation Area. But the development site is outside its boundary, so that doesn't count. The land, in fact, along with the cemetery, used to fall within the London Borough of Kensington & Chelsea, until a boundary change ceded it to Brent. And, oddly enough, Brent Council is thoroughly in favour of the scheme. Indeed, a planning officer was overheard remarking to the developers that of course it will get planning permission as there are insufficient grounds for the opposition to stop it. I wonder why not? English Heritage is opposed, as are the Roman Catholic, Greek Orthodox and Anglican Churches. But the London Borough of Brent has no time for sentimentality, after all.

'Piloti'

AN EDUCATIONAL EXPERIMENT

Aim of experiment: To fill the £69m vacuum in the further education budget inherited from David Blunkett's predecessor at the Department of Education.

Method: EITHER (1) the massive cutback — involving (1.a) job losses for teachers or (1.b) teachers forced into contracts which offer less holiday for the same pay; OR (2) the massive overestimate — of the number of students being enrolled, to get more cash from the funding council.

An example: Wakefield College lost 150 lecturers over the last five years, while student numbers were rising. Now another 100 jobs are going and the brunt is being borne by those who have not shown sufficient "flexibility" during the cutbacks, ie anyone who has spoken out against the Big Brother regime of college principal John "Smoking" Muskett.

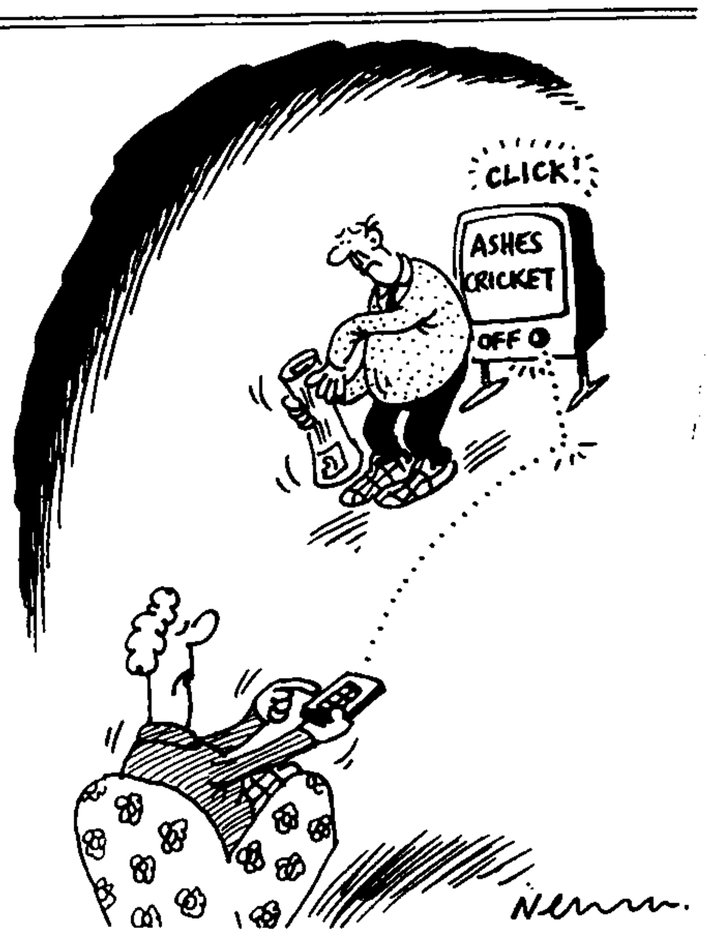
Results: Sacked lecturers are given minutes to clear their desks and security staff are called to escort them from their premises — all the usual signs of total quality management.

Conclusion: Such further education funding crises normally receive less attention than threats to the higher education sector, as further education serves an overwhelmingly working class constituency, while higher education is increasingly becoming the preserve of the middle class.

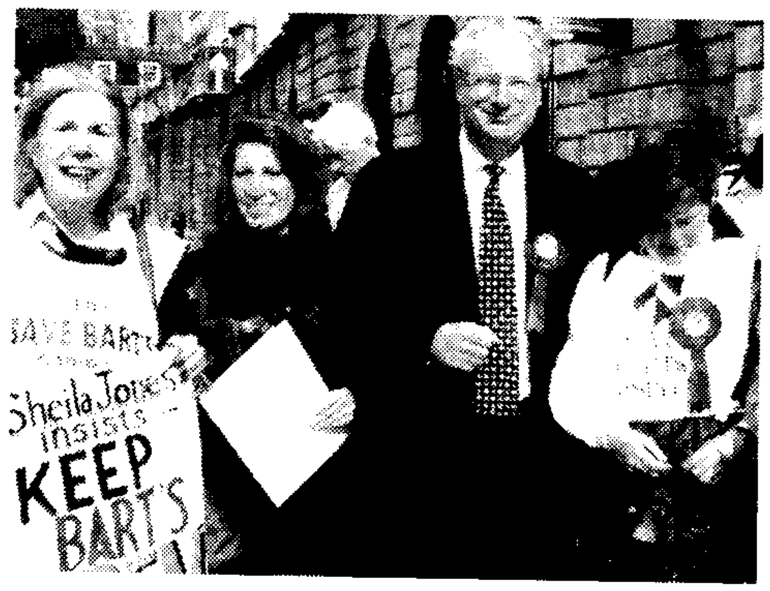
No doubt that will change now that Labour is in power, won't it?

JUST FANCY THAT!

WEST Midlands Police are offering a vacancy as a driver to civilians in their area. Their advertisement to prospective employees advised that the contract would last six months, that they would be based at Brierley Hill police station and that, er, the application form was available in braille if they required it.



DOING THE ROUNDS



Bart's and Chris Smith

AFTER increasing his majority in Islington South and Finsbury by more than 4000 votes, Chris Smith MP went briefly to bed in the certainty that the following morning he would be called in by the new Prime Minister and named Secretary of State for Health.

His diary was full of appropriate appointments. For instance, he had written to Alan Langlands, head of the NHS Executive, asking for a meeting on the first working day after the election — 6 May — to discuss the waste of money in NHS information technology.

When he finally got the call to Downing Street he was told to his astonishment and chagrin that he wasn't to be Health Secretary after all, but had been relegated to the Department of National Heritage. This sudden switch by Blair was out of character. Almost all the other Cabinet ministers were appointed to the departments they had shadowed in opposition. A year of detailed preparation by Smith was wasted. So why was he moved?

One word supplies the answer: Bart's. For years Smith had been a bitter opponent of the proposed closure of London's St Bartholomew's Hospital. In 1995, when Tory Health Secretary Virginia Bottomley announced that Bart's was due to close by the end of the century, Smith fulminated: "This is an appalling decision which shames those who took it." He led a delegation to Bottomley which he described as follows: "We told her what local people felt about her plans. We told her how many vulnerable and elderly people live in the vicinity of the hospital. We told her about the difficulties of getting to any of the alternatives. We told her of the unmet health needs. But she took no notice at all. It makes my blood boil to think of all this going to waste. And just because of the obstinacy of an out-of-touch government. This decision must be changed. We must keep up the battle to save the hospital."

At the time, Mr Smith was Labour's front bench spokesman for social security. When he moved over to health last year, his enthusiasm for the Save Bart's campaign never slackened. Again and again he gave the campaign the most unequivocal assurances. His pledges rose to a crescendo as the election campaign got under way. "Let me use words of one syllable," he told his local newspaper on 10 April. "We will put an immediate stop to the closure of Bart's. We will do it on the first day of the Labour government."

Imagine the campaigners' dismay, therefore, when Tony Blair was asked about Bart's on the BBC's *Election Call* two days before polling day, and replied: "Bart's is a very, very difficult issue because that closure programme is already under way. I am worried about making promises we can't follow up in government." Wendy Mead, of the Save Bart's campaign, fired off a furious letter denouncing the "immense damage" Blair's answer had done to the campaigners. Blair's reply — that Labour are stopping the closure programme pending a review — was small comfort in view of his remarks about the "closure programme" being "already under way".

Smith himself was ordered to write to the campaign that "Tony's position and mine on this important issue are exactly the same". This was no use either. Their positions, as is clear from the quotations above, were quite different in emphasis and in substance. The two men's positions cannot possibly be described as "exactly the same" until the government announces that Bart's will definitely not be closed.

Tony Blair hates nothing more than a clear commitment which might involve spending money. He was embarrassed by Smith's enthusiasm for Barts, and Smith duly paid the price.

Thought for the New Day

LOTHIAN Health Board has ordered **West Lothian Trust** to draw up plans for the closure of two wards in order to fund a 3.4 per cent nationally negotiated pay rise for staff which, according to the previous government, must come out of "productivity increases" (i.e. ward closures). With Labour planning to increase the NHS budget by a whopping 0.6 per cent, can we expect plenty more ward closures — I mean productivity increases — all round?

"Our hospital has all the latest equipment"

LUVVIES

"The character of Kirk," he says with appropriate gravity, "is pretty much based on myself. He is a classical humanist. I do admire the classical Greek philosophy of balance and unity, in their drama, in their statuary. It was the greatest flowering of mankind, and I think of Ancient Greece as a time in which I would have liked to live.

"Alexander the Great," he says, deadpan. "The ideal of the soldier philosopher. Who better to captain the ship on the edges of the unknown? Star Trek is a spiritual journey, and people spot that. That's why it has proved so popular, so enduring. It is a journey where no psyche has gone before."

WILLIAM SHATNER
Daily Telegraph

Submitted by Alan Magrath.

An occasional column devoted to gems from the acting profession. £10 paid for entries.

SIGNAL FAILURES

HOW many people does it take to repair a station information screen on the privatised railway? The answer depends on the outcome of an independent report commissioned by Railtrack into the nature of the fault in question.

Passengers at Lancaster station have been guessing at the destinations of trains for months, because the information screens there stopped functioning in December. The screens showed arrivals and departures, lists of stops for each train, platform directions and information about delays. British Rail would have sent out an engineer within hours, or at the most days, but today's private rail businesses insist on an independent report to establish who pays for the repair work. If the fault at Lancaster arose from the way the information system was being operated, Virgin Rail would have to pay; if the system needed renewing, Railtrack must foot the bill.

Both parties in this case are huge companies. It is likely that the Virgin group will derive more income from its rail operations than its airline in a few years' time. Railtrack owns the entire infrastructure of the former BR and its assets are measured in billions of pounds. Yet neither company was willing to commit the tiny sum needed to repair the screens at Lancaster as long as the possibility of avoiding the payment remained.

In the meantime, the passengers themselves are forgotten. Railtrack couldn't care less (passengers are not Railtrack customers) and Virgin Rail seems more interested in painting trains red and giving them silly names than in looking after the basic needs of its customers.

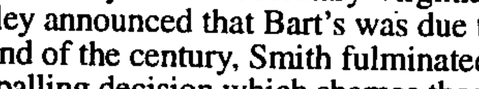
'Dr B. Ching'

DOWN ON THE FARM

ONE can almost hear the salivation, the gleeful anticipation of new jobs by the bucket-load, as the new Labour administration cranks up its plans for a food standards agency, to be launched as the "Health and Food Safety Commission".

Central to the plan set out by Professor Phillip James, who was commissioned by Tony Blair to write the template, is that the new commission should report solely to the Department of Health, sidelining the Ministry of Agriculture, aka Maffia, much to the chagrin of its new boss, Dr Jack Cunningham, who even last week was advocating a joint reporting arrangement.

It is a cruel irony that the Department of Stealth, at least equally responsible with the Maffia for the continuing run of food safety cock-ups, is to get all the glory.



INTERESTINGLY, according to the Prof. James writ, licensing of veterinary medicines is to come under the responsibility of the new food safety commission. This means, presumably, that control of organophosphate (OPs) pesticides will no longer be the responsibility of the Maffia, and sheep farmers who have used OP sheep dips (*Eyes passim*) will be looking to the Department of Stealth for recompense. Given the fate of the listeria victims, however, it is unlikely that they will fare any better with the new department.

On the other hand, they were not likely to get anywhere with the new Agriculture minister, Jack Cunningham, a former research fellow in chemistry at Durham University and onetime consultant to a number of multinational chemical manufacturers. Less than a week in post, 'Mad' Jack has already told BBC's *Farming Today* that there is no evidence of OPs causing chronic damage to sheep farmers — a seamless policy accord with the previous administration.

Meanwhile, Dr Bob Davis, a West Country psychiatrist, has demonstrated a high risk of suicide among those suffering chronic organophosphate poisoning. Of 22 farmers he studied, 19 reported suicidal impulses.

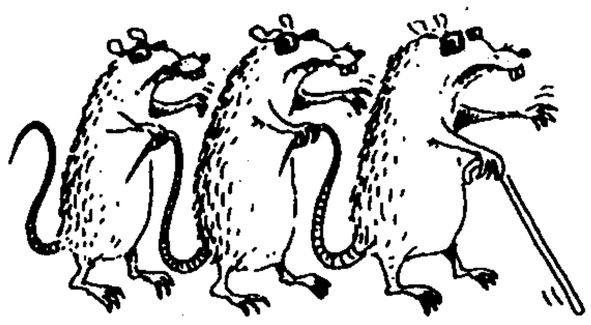
DEVELOPMENTS in the US are set to circumvent any fine-sounding resolutions of the new government to limit the spread of biotechnology.

Chemical giant Monsanto is steadily buying up traditional seed companies and soon will own, or have a stake in, some 78 per cent of the market. By this means it aims to corner the market in maize and soyabeans, forcing American farmers to use its genetically-modified, herbicide-resistant products.

US sources are now confident that neither "Europe" nor the UK will be able to resist accepting biotechnology products from America — because there will be nothing else on offer.

Biotech companies are already crowing: "Ready or not, here we come!"

'New Muckspreader'



Rotten Boroughs

Doncaster

THE DONNYGATE saga, carefully suppressed by New Labour during its election campaign, has reared its ugly head once more.

Labour-dominated Doncaster Council saw its own chief executive, Doug Hale, escorted from the building last week and told not to return until a police enquiry and district auditor's report had been completed. Hale had already been suspended on full pay (£80,000 a year) but was shown the town hall door when he tried to re-enter the building.

Donnygate began when the district auditor discovered massive overspending by councillors. While the council itself struggled with cuts of £8m, the councillors enjoyed beanos abroad to, er, drum up trade for the area.

They also visited their twin towns of which Doncaster has five, Wilmington in South Carolina, Avion in Northern France, Herten in Germany, Dandong in China and Gliwice in Poland. Trips would include club class flights and drunken "working" lunches. The auditor found one meal for two which cost an obscene £284.

Doncaster Council Watch, set up by reviled locals, has now produced a table of the expenses claimed by the worst offenders since 1990.

Tony Sellars, the chairman of the Labour group, claimed a total of £69,475 over those years, while Peter Welsh, the Labour council leader until his recent resignation, claimed an immense £92,649. These figures did not include £500 of annual free race tickets per member, nor plane tickets for flights abroad, nor their use of council credit cards, now cancelled. The councillors were issued £30 expenses per day but also used these credit cards to pay for hotel mini-bars, phone bills and videos.

Local anger at this rampant greed produced Doncaster's very own anti-corruption candidate, Neil Swan, who managed to scoop over a thousand votes in a solidly Labour constituency.

Now Doncaster awaits the report of South Yorkshire's Inspector t'Knacker. It was initially expected to focus on councillor's expenses claims but investigations have now widened to look at land deals, the granting of planning permission to developers and the allocation of contracts by the council.

Of particular interest is the relationship between the council and a builder and developer called Keepmoat which got the first option on surplus council land and shares the profit with the council. Watch this space.

Lambeth

THE internal inquiry into Lambeth's Tooting Bec Gardens hostel for the homeless, where managers allowed prostitution and crack dealing to flourish, has concluded that three senior managers should face charges of gross misconduct.

The report reveals, as stated in *Eye* 914, that two female workers at the hostel had their complaints — that they were sexually harassed by their line-manager, Tooley Wanogho, and that the hostel was used for prostitution and crack dealing — ignored by Wanogho's bosses, Keith Careswell and David Ward.

Ward in fact decided to suspend one of the women for allegedly attacking Wanogho. Careswell meanwhile has admitted, at an industrial tribunal hearing, that he had sex with one of the prostitutes at the hostel.

It has also come to light that the prostitute that Careswell had sex with, was one of eight "working" at Tooting Bec Gardens under the control of a pimp known only as "Michael".

The inquiry also uncovered evidence that another of the council's hostels, located in Jeffrey Road, Stockwell, was the scene of organised prostitution and crack dealing.

The fact that Lambeth has admitted that two of its hostels were used for organised prostitution, during the period when rumours of a porn ring were rife in the housing HQ, Hambrook House, has led to calls for a further inquiry to examine claims that people in the highest echelons are involved in a cover-up.

Local Democracy?

TAXPAYERS who want to complain about their local council might think again following Bradford council's announcement that it will make public the names of critics and the cost of their queries. Although some councillors have condemned the move as an infringement of civil liberties the move has the backing of all main parties — and district auditors KPMG, who see it as a way of cutting the cost of the investigations the council is obliged to carry out when members of the public challenge council matters.

Hillingdon

LABOUR-controlled Hillingdon is going to extraordinary lengths to solve a so-called housing crisis in the borough. The council supposedly has to build 10,000 new homes by the year 2006 and is fast running out of land. Having been forced to drop recent proposals to build 30 new homes on school playing fields and more on land occupied by Hayes stadium, councillors have come up with a remarkable solution: they're going to build in the back gardens of council houses.

By an amazing coincidence the council's housing chairman, Jon Davey, is also the "development co-ordinator" for Co-op Homes Services, a housing association which is also part of the Hillingdon Housing Consortium, a group of housing associations brought together by the council to tackle the local housing "crisis". And Davey is vice-chair of the council sub-committee in charge of taking land out of the Green Belt to be used for new build. Of course, Cllr Davey always declares an interest.

Pseuds Corner

And what about gardening? What else is it but a benign form of environmental activism? After all, gardens have personalities. Mine is a woman in her forties, ripe and abundant, blooming and drooping like the poppies I planted this year.

ANITA RODDICK
Independent on Sunday

O.C.E.A.N.U.K. promotes a radically heuristic and innovative professionalism within the cultural context of transitional political landscapes and Global Convergence. The mobility of context requires systematic connectivity and multiplicity for the investigative potential in urbanism and architecture. The practice seeks to enable the enhancement of multitudinous conditions, adhering to intensified regimes of difference, to adapt the familiar and to solicit an alien new space.

Urban Design Quarterly

Computer consultant Bruno Beloss... first became a zebra seven years ago... "It started as a visual idea, but it turned out to be a wonderful form of escapism... For me, being a zebra is a chance to be honest about who I am. Which is a fantastic relief."

... Zebra Man is planning to appear publicly this summer as part of a large herd (possibly at Glastonbury).

Independent on Sunday

It was the River Wye and Tintern Abbey which inspired what is possibly the first great narrative landscape poem in our language. Since Wordsworth's time landscape has infused British fiction. Raymond Williams himself was alive to this. It is the connection between landscape and fiction which I want to touch on with particular reference to the work of Thomas Hardy, DH Lawrence, RL Stevenson and myself.

MELVYN BRAGG
Hay Festival brochure

The micro moment of female sexual humiliation — the expectation of the women's silence in the face of it — and the macro status quo of female exclusion were related; were functional coefficients.

NAOMI WOLF
Guardian

The social connections of the banjo had been obscured by its repeated disappearances from popular music; its marginality, its obdurate indissolubility in social meaning, gave it an eerily unlocatable quality, a "signifier in isolation" — comparable, perhaps, to a soldier's carbine protruding uncannily, unbelievably, from a book-depository window — no longer grounded in our understanding of how the material world articulates with the social system, producing a fissure in social reality itself. The banjo in a sense reversed the current of signification, becoming intensely fascinating *in itself*, as its devotees sought to absorb it into their phenomenal life by inscribing it with new orders of meaning that would pacify or subdue it.

ROBERT CANTWELL
'When We Were Good — The Folk Revival'

CONTRIBUTORS: Neil Hudson, Keith Horner, Bill Homewood, Huw Roberts, Charlotte Purkis, Mark Keville.

£10 paid for entries

Letters

Lookalike

Goldsmith

Flea

Sir,

I was very struck by this resemblance between The Ghost Of A Flea by William Blake and Sir James Goldsmith. Is there a relationship between Blake's vision and Putney's visionary? But I think I'd rather not be told.

Cheers,
VANILLA BEER,
London SE18.

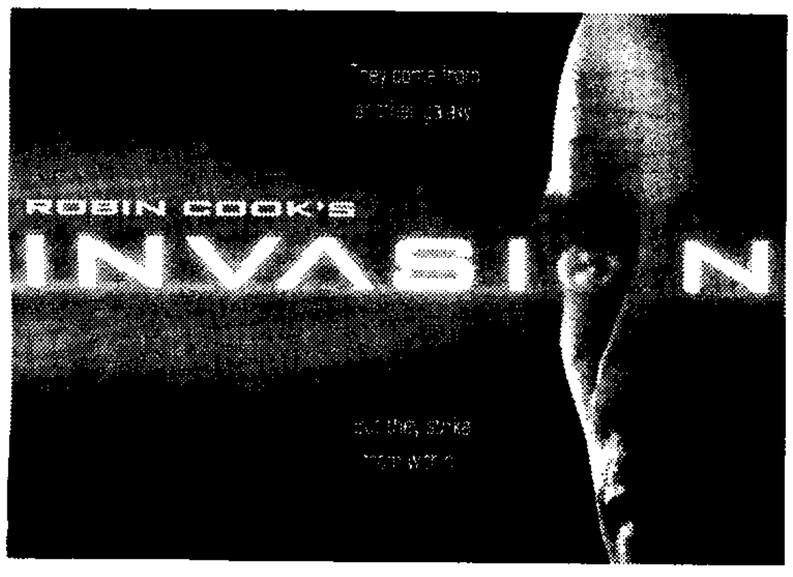
Love's Labour's win

Sir,

As a subscriber, I was amazed at your decision to anticipate the result of the 1997 election. Despite there being at least 48 hours before the election, your cover of EYE *923 bravely predicts a "Blair Landslide". Such daring in the face of efforts of certain sections of the press to attach more meaning to polls than is prudent is very foresighted.*

Furthermore, until I had seen the issue I was not aware of the possibility that the Tories could be unseated if I voted for Blair. Thank you PRIVATE EYE. *Although other newspapers may claim credit for organising tactical voting and mobilising Euroscepticism, it was truly the* EYE *wot did for the Tories.*

Yours gratefully,
DR ALEX MAY,
University College, London WC1.



Advertisement

Pissing in the wind

Sir,

The water company official depicted in EYE *923 pissing on the floor seems to have hypospadias — "a defect in the wall of the urethra so that part of the canal is open on the underside of the penis". I wonder whether he or other people born with this condition will understand why you think the cartoon is funny.*

Yours fraternally,
NIGEL TURNER,
Via e-mail.

Day-tripper

Sir,

Virgin Rail (Signal Failures, EYE *923) might have more cause for complaint concerning SWWR's Manchester-Penzance service if they actually bothered to provide a decent service between Plymouth and Manchester. One direct train a day each way, arriving mid-afternoon in both cases, hardly counts as a service.*

I assume that Virgin's hypocritical attitude to competition stems from their much publicised battle with British Airways.

ROBERT SUMMERS,
Keele University.

Whitewash

Sir,

MD derides Brighton's efforts to set up an emergency team that can deal with a collapse, road traffic accident, industrial accident anywhere in the grounds of a hospital, which can be very extensive.

It is white coated wallies such as him who have for years refused to think about where their coats are washed, where patients' food comes from, and where the nurses etc live who have given the NHS the 'them and us' culture that has done so much harm.

Learn a new trick, MD. Think before you slag off the menials and the suits who are actually trying to achieve something.

S. WILLIAMSON,
Manchester.

"Heathcliff? It's me, it's Cathy!..."

Re-defined

Sir,

If you are going to feature a "Beak of the Week" piece would it not be a good idea to employ a journalist or a sub who has some slight knowledge of the law and/or Court procedure before getting egg on your august face?

In the current EYE *you quite reasonably ask "Should single mothers go to prison for unpaid TV licence fines?" No, they shouldn't. More to the point, they don't. No one does. Not even Sharon Shephard, the subject of your piece. Non-payment of fines, whatever they were imposed for, is not imprisonable.*

What fine-defaulters are sent to prison for — as a last resort, after all other means of collection and enforcement have been tried and failed, and after personal examination by the Court — is one of two things: wilful refusal or culpable neglect.

The first might arise if the defaulter had (or had had) the money but had refused to pay it into Court. The second would come into play if the defaulter had acted, or refused to act, so as to deprive him — or herself — of the means to pay. The Court decides if either applies after hearing evidence, including evidence from the defaulter.

It follows that it is not poverty which is punished, but intransigence; and, although an unpaid fine is the stimulus of the judicial action the offence proper, so to speak, is the deliberate flouting of the Court's original imposition.

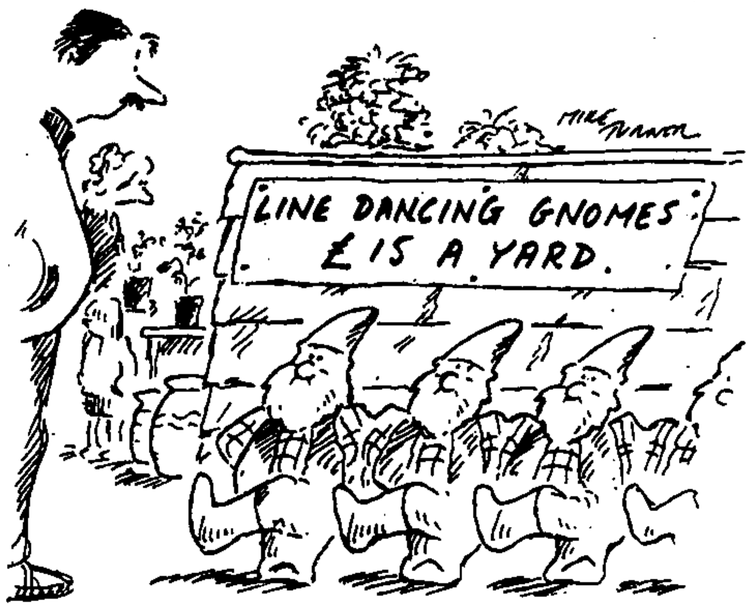
Yours faithfully,
MICHAEL BROWN, JP, CPFA,
Highbridge, Somerset.

Terms of endearment

Sir,

There are no hostilities between myself and my colleague Graeme McLagan. You are wrong to suggest we are not on speaking terms. There is no justification for your claim that my wife's book ALL MUST HAVE PRIZES *libelled his wife. You spelled both our names wrongly. But you were right about the beard.*

Yours faithfully,
JOSHUA ROZENBERG,
London W12.



Go two pieces

Sir,

Re: page 9, issue no.923: "So West Hull Labour MP Stuart Randall decided not to run for Parliament because 'my wife Gill and I decided to spend more time together and with other members of the family'. What tosh."

Wait a minute. Where have I read that before? Ah yes, of course, there it is, right opposite on page 8 of the same issue!!! All four bleedin' paragraphs of the exact same story.

And this isn't the first time that this sort of thing has happened either is it? Doesn't anybody give the mag a final proof-read before the EYE *goes to press? Or is it just a case of "New Technology baffles pissed old hacks"? I think we should be told. Don't let it happen again, do you hear? Or I might come around demanding a job as a proof reader, and you wouldn't want that now would you?*

Yours shocked,
PAUL BLEZARD,
London SW13.

PS. At least you're only regurgitating your own stuff. I thought I'd read the INDEPENDENT*'s Page One "exclusive" on Major, Nagel et al somewhere before last Monday. And of course it was the last issue of the* EYE*... Can newspapers be sued for breaching the Trades Descriptions Act?*

Lookalike

Golden Boy

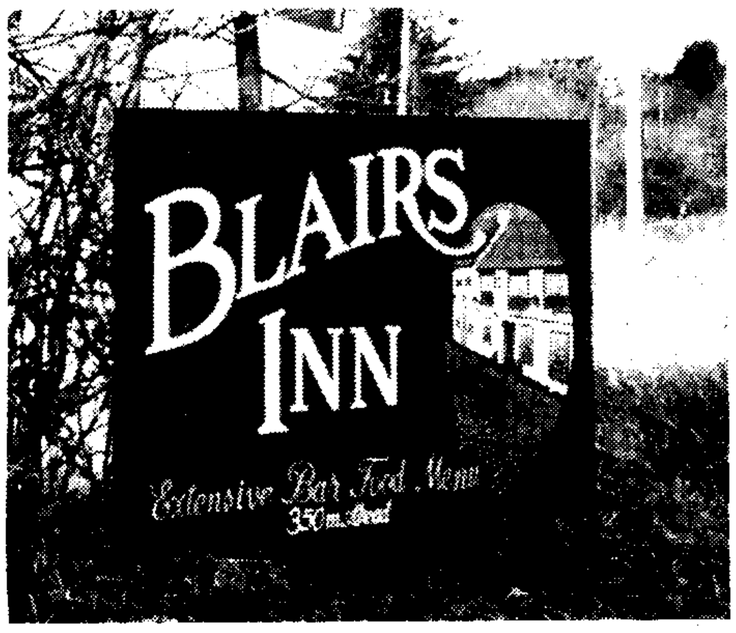
Mellor

Sir,

I am enclosing a cutting from the SUNDAY TIMES *of 20 April 1997. I found the similarity between Ma Ching-kwan and David Mellor most uncanny. Does anyone else think the same?*

Yours faithfully,
MRS S. ASKARI,
Coventry.

I-SPY *Blarney, Ireland*



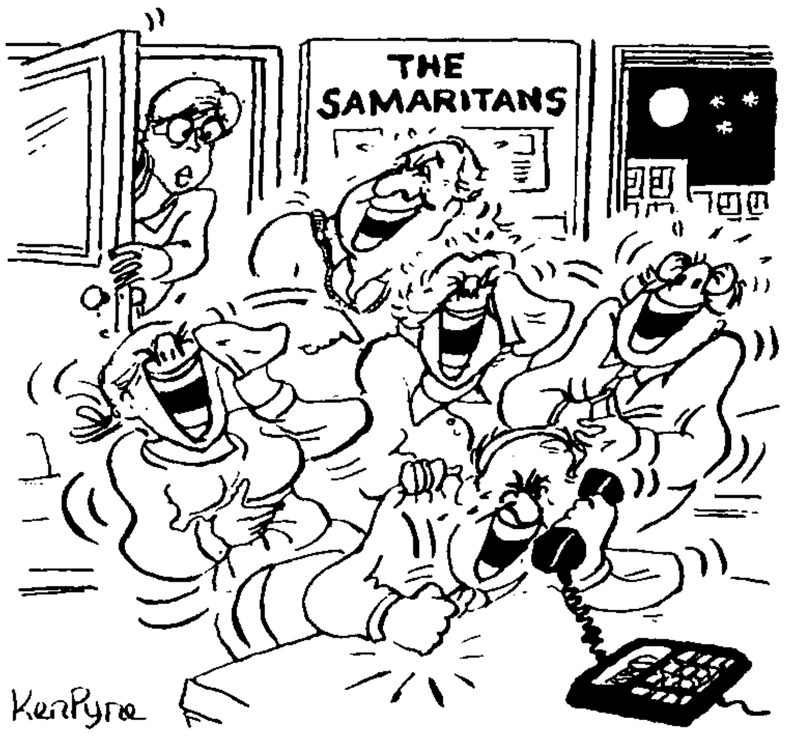
Submitted by Pat Codd. £10 paid for similar submissions. *(SAE required for return of photographs. No transparencies.)*

Spice girl

Sir,

Your "Funny Old World" column has a natural tendency to be a survey of funny-foreigners, but dehumanising its victims completely is another matter. Apparently, sexual abuse is an amusing subject if it happens in Zaire (2 May, spotter: Dr M. Bush). Or perhaps this story was an excuse for the inevitable cartoon of a naked woman. I can think of no other reason for running this sick story.

ANDREW ROBERTSON,
Bewdley, Worcs.



"It's another ex-Tory MP!"

Solt & saltmen

Sir,

Your claim that Anglian Water had "taken your advice" and taken to desalination is pure chutzpah, and your report that Reverse Osmosis (RO) was discovered in 1858 is grossly misleading. I work in desalination, and have done since 1952, so I should know.

I'm on a metered supply from Anglian Water paying 73p/m³ for water delivered to my house. Most of that cost is in the distribution system. The ex-works cost of water is maybe 10p/m³ — far less than desalted water, anyway. Anglian's proposed RO plant must therefore serve as a supplement to their normal supply, with the rest of the region subsidising its high operating cost. I bet it won't run a day longer than necessary.

Here's the sums you should have done before rushing into print: an average household uses 600 litres of water a day. If desalted water costs, say, 40p/m³ more, its water bill would rise by about £100 per year. I don't disagree with you about the water companies' dividends and bonuses, but this is another order of magnitude entirely. Besides, desalted water isn't very nice to drink.

Yours faithfully,
PROFESSOR GEORGE SOLT,
Olney, Bucks.

Up and downhearted

Sir,

I was rather downhearted to read in your esteemed organ a further repetition of a rather embellished story in your Funny Old World column. Normally, I assume that it is against the ethics of your magazine to publish falsehoods, as I have always relied upon your magazine as a beacon of truth in a sea of lies. Or something like that.

The story to which I refer is the Larry Walters balloon trip saga. Unfortunately, it is scarcely recognisable to what actually occurred — it was only a 45 minute trip, no helicopter was involved and he shot one of the balloons to descend, crashed into some power lines but was unhurt. He committed suicide a few years later.

I have heard about the Darwin awards many times on television and radio and have also read the balloon story in an article in the INDEPENDENT *by William Hartston. They also printed the previous two years' "winners", which involved a Coke machine killing someone and a rocket or jet powered car. Sadly, both of these are urban legends. I wrote to the* INDEPENDENT *but they have yet to acknowledge their errors. Perhaps your organ could do so and help puncture the falsehoods being spread over the Internet.*

Incidentally, after much research, I cannot find out who "awards" the Darwin awards. Perhaps the awards are urban myths too?

Yours truthfully,
ANTONY WERNHAM,
Via e-mail.

Innocent by degree

Sir,

Today's journalists, it seems, are loath to allow facts to spoil a good joke, or to temper their snobbishness. Appearing with Ian Hislop on "Have I Got News For You?" recently, Will Self was clearly unaware that Labour's deputy leader has a degree. This reminded me that "HP Sauce" is equally ignorant. In EYE *921 we are led to believe that John Prescott's grasp of economics is based entirely on a few tutorials with Lord Desai of LSE.*

For the record, John Prescott gained an honours degree in economics from Hull University in 1968, having already obtained by examination an Oxford University Diploma in Economics and Political Science in 1965. I should know, being just one year behind him at both Hull and Ruskin College, Oxford.

Yours faithfully,
TOM KILCOURSE,
Colyton, Devon.

HOME Secretary Michael Howard's election wagon swept into town - with Land of Hope and Glory blazing from every orifice - much to the delight of the local Tory, flag waving faithful.

Richmond & Twickenham Times

Bruegel's

Men Bee-hiving Badly

War of words

Sir,

Alan Hayhurst (Upon My Word EYE *923) must have spent his 60 years living in the other North of England... or maybe he's just never been any further west than Leeds. I can assure him that East Yorkshire is full of "Boogers". It's a fairly recent regional pronunciation probably stemming from mixing it with those damned Lancastrians.*

Silly Fooker.

Yours from the foot of our stairs,
PETE RICHES,
London W3.

Colemanballs

£10 paid for contributions

"We must look at them with a piece of salt!"

GORDON BROWN, BBC News
(W.J. Archer)

"... and I see that in the centre of the square there is a large conical erection with a virgin on it."

DILLY BARLOW, Radio 4
(Roger Slater)

Presenter: *How tall is Prince Naseem Hamed? 5ft 1in, 5ft 3in or 5ft 5in?*
Caller: *5ft 4in.*

Radio 5 Live
(Dan Smith)

"And he's treading on dangerous water there..."

RON ATKINSON, ITV
(Trevor Lines)

"One or two people are streaming away."

Commentator, Radio 5 Live
(P. Higgins)

HOM SAP BY DAVID AUSTIN

FUNNY OLD WORLD

● "This is an immoral show where humans torture animals and themselves for money" a spokesman for the Pattaya police force told reporters. "It is cruel and demeaning, and that is why we are determined to stamp out these evil sexy shows before they take root in our town."

The Thai police spokesman was referring to the arrest of four go-go dancers

and a night club manager for performing an immoral and improper act in a tourist bar. "Before they go on, the girls put ducklings inside plastic eggs, and then insert the eggs inside their vaginas. Then they go on stage, dance around to the music and, at the end of the song, squat down and lay an egg while the customers cheer. It's true that the eggs have little air holes in them, but it's clear that the ducklings can't breathe properly while they're inside the girls because, when they're finally hatched, they rush out gasping for air."

The dancers were fined 1,000 baht each and released, there being no specific law against hatching ducks from vaginas in Thailand. *(Reuter, 20/3/97. Spotter: N J Rampley)*

—●—

● "We have none left," said deputy education minister Craig Dotson, in response to a question from a councillor in Regina. "All the excess inventory has been disposed of in an orderly way, as we originally said it would be. I can therefore confirm that the whole of the Saskatchewan government's surplus supply of wooden penises has now gone."

Thus ended the Saskatchewan government's embarrassment over the 1,000 wooden penises it had bought in 1994. "As you know, we originally bought them with the intention of demonstrating to schoolchildren the proper way to use condoms. Only six of them were actually ever used for that purpose, but over the past two years we have sold three hundred to the University of Alberta, two hundred to the Manitoba education department, and a hundred to a coalition of disabled people in Winnipeg. Twenty more went to the University of Kansas, twenty to an experimental theatre company in San Francisco, forty to a lesbian collective in Seattle, a hundred to the Ohio Church of Jesus Christ, seventy to the children's entertainer 'Mr Blowey', thirty-seven to a New York cable tv station, and the rest to a well-known manufacturer of personal hygiene products, who wishes to remain anonymous. On average, the department received $4.10 per penis, thus covering our costs. In passing, I should mention that we also had several hundred enquiries from individuals, each asking if they could buy just one wooden penis, but we refused all orders for less than a dozen, because of handling charges." *(Leader-Star News [Saskatchewan], 26/3/97. Spotter: Peter Teal)*

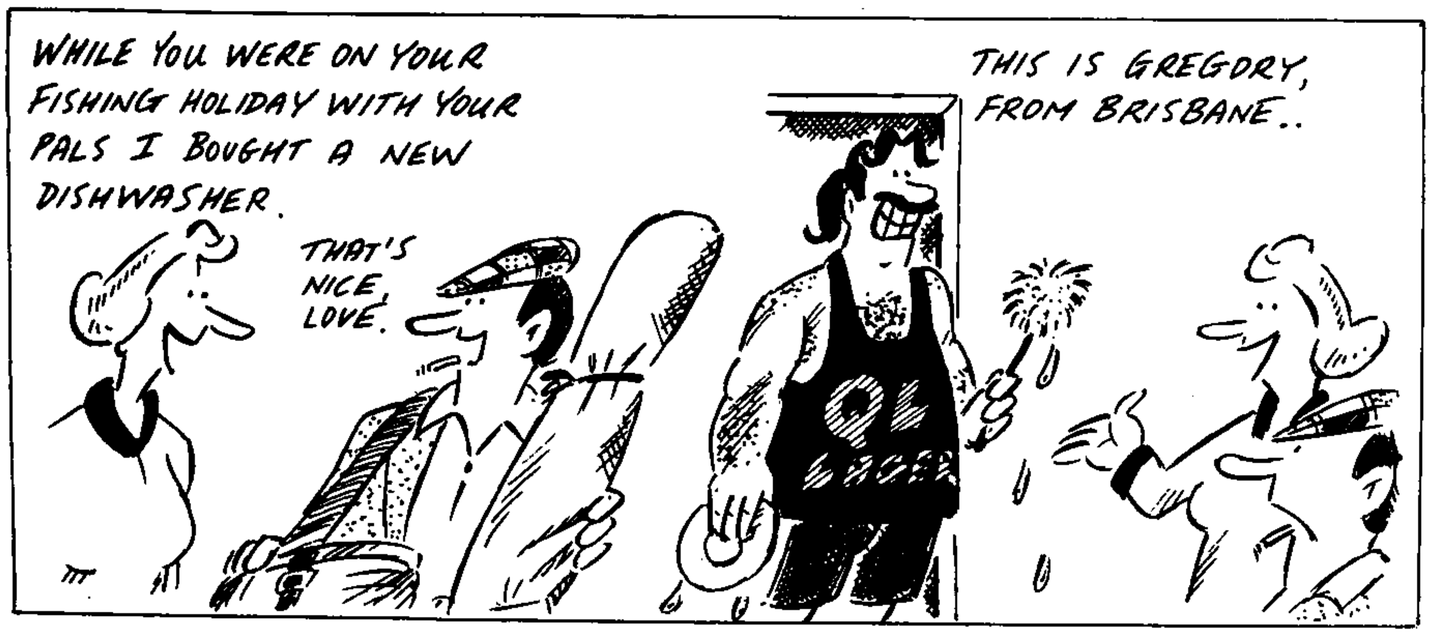
—●—

● *"Correction. In my article in the January issue of Horoscope, I reported on the possible effects of a solar eclipse during that month. Though my research indicated that there would be a solar eclipse on January 8, I have since been informed from all sides by reliable sources that the configuration was not actually an eclipse, but merely a New Moon. Though I am chagrined by the error, this is in truth good news, because the more ominous implications of this particular sun-moon combination have been greatly mitigated. Therefore, the world economy, while still somewhat uncertain, is not really in danger of imminent collapse, and we can all breathe a little easier. However, I still advise that all should prepare for the possibility of recession, or even depression. But this is a good practice even in the best of times. Mary Devlin."* (Horoscope, March 1997. Spotter: Clive Wilkinson)

COMPILED BY **VICTOR LEWIS-SMITH**

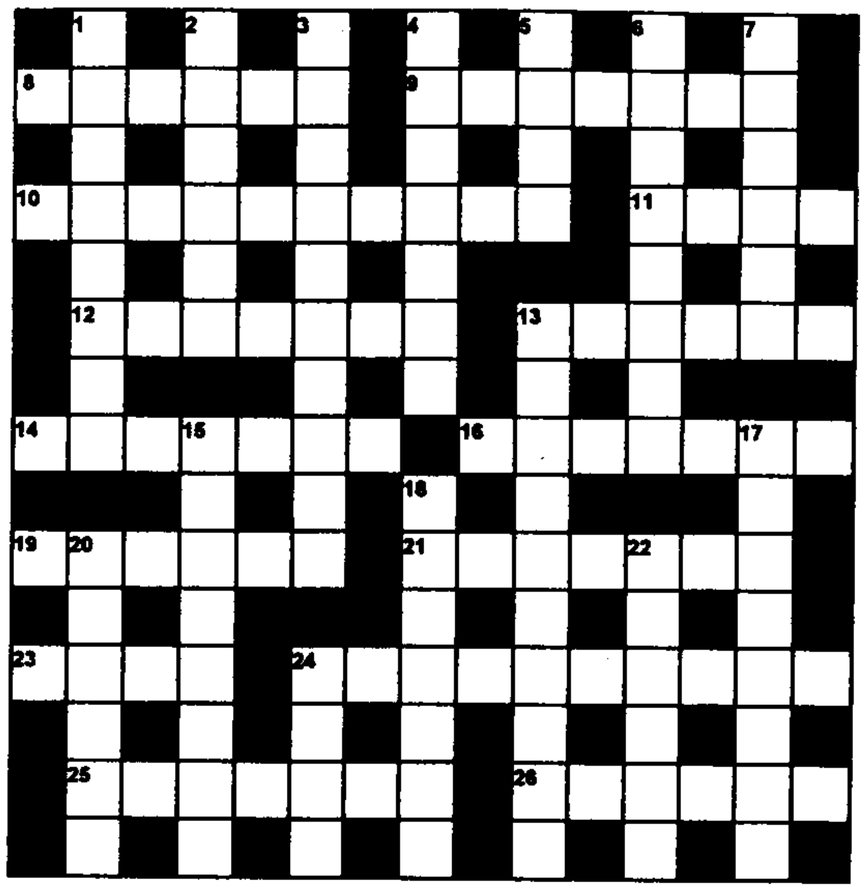
The Lottery Winners

TURNER


WHILE YOU WERE ON YOUR FISHING HOLIDAY WITH YOUR PALS I BOUGHT A NEW DISHWASHER.
THAT'S NICE, LOVE.
THIS IS GREGORY, FROM BRISBANE..

EYE CROSSWORD 79

by Cyclops *£100 prize*



ACROSS

8 The other half of Brenda's tonic, it's said (6)
9 Wogan revived with external oxygen line — for which the other side's most grateful! (3,4)
10/15 Roger conventionally taking this view that pagan foreigners should be converted? (10,8)
11 'Punch affiliated to hard left!'— premier (4)
12 Treated as dirt, without interest, John Major is no longer ours (7)
13 Boxers entertain a number of pansies possibly (6)
14 What Di likes to do: give the castle a seizure! (4,3)
16 Brenda's captivated by new heartthrob, a bit like Mr Bean (7)
19 Cooler, on ship these days? (6)
21 Ex-luvvie shows interest in ring attached to organ (7)
23 National Conservative piss artist circles (4)
24 Silent rotten borough, so-called Hollywood (6,4)
25 One who roughly puts down a tosser (7)
26 The gaffer can be relied on to make this member in a good mood (4-2)

DOWN

1 One and only trendy Di taking exercise initially — needs a cure for poor circulation? (3,5)
2 One politician embracing girl gets erection, the bloody sap (6)
3 Work situation required for the Tories now! (10)
4 A percentage of Brenda's sort of people (7)
5 Royal makes date whatever's around (4)
6/18 Our regular look at erections, endless sex on beach (tricky positions) (5,3,7)
7 Superannuated, clapped out bowler? (3,3)
13 Di Spencer's wayward youth in Bill's hands once again (10)
15 (see 10)
17 Roger, plied with drink, makes a complete balls of it (6,2)
18 (see 6)
20 Caught one penetrating screwy peer — the makings of a fruit cake? (6)
22 Virgin operation headed by stupid nit! (6)
24 A real drag for hippies? (4)

£100 prize to first correct solution opened on 23.5.97. Entries to "Crossword", Private Eye, 6 Carlisle Street, London W1V 5RG.

Solution to Crossword No. 78

Winner: PADDY WILKES

ACROSS: 8 Alehouse 9 Mad Max 10 Smarmy 11 Rees-Mogg 12/18 Expletive deleted 14 Sneak 16 Al-Fayed 18 (see 12) 20 Ibsen 21 Lord Reith 24 Red shift 25 Rogers 27 Ethics 28 Sunshade.

DOWN: 1 Climax 2 Cher 3 Sun Yat-sen 4 Henry VI 5 Amber 6 Adam and Eve 7 Language 13/19 Leadership contest 15 Dead drunk 17 Libretto 19 (see 13) 22 Tirade 23 Tipsy 26 GCHQ.

ST ALBION PARISH NEWS

The Vicarage

Hello! I'm Tony, your new vicar! And that's what I'd like you to call me — Tony!

The first thing I'd like to do is to give a big thank-you to everybody for choosing me as the new incumbent, and to say what a lovely warm welcome you've given myself and Cherie! I hope you will get to know her as well as me in the challenging years ahead, although she will be continuing with her career as she has every right to do!

It is a truly awesome responsibility you have placed on my shoulders, and I shall do my utmost to be worthy of the trust you have placed in me!

You will not need me to tell you that there is much to do, and that this is a tough parish to take on!

Things have got pretty run-down in recent years, as we all know, and our financial position leaves a good deal to be desired! And that's why we're very fortunate that Mr Brown, the bank manager, has agreed to come in and do the books!

As you know, Cherie and I have just moved into the vicarage, which was clearly not designed for a young family with high-spirited children!

Still, all is going well, and there is even room for my guitar, which those of you who come to evensong will soon be hearing more of! You have been warned!

I know what a lot of you are wondering is — are there going to be any changes in the way St Albion's is run?

The answer is, yes and no! Yes there are, and no there aren't! But more of that later! But the main thing is that I intend to hit the ground running!

I've got a great team of helpers, especially a huge number of ladies (I'm not complaining about that!) and I know that we're all singing from the same hymn sheet (Mr Mandelson, our new churchwarden, is going to make sure of that!).

I will leave you this time with just one thought. Being in charge here means that I and my team think of ourselves as very much the servants and not the masters! And don't let's forget that we're here to serve the *whole* community. That means everyone, not just the Faithful!

See you on Sunday!

Tony

PS. I don't know who started the rumours about the vicarage cat, Humphrey, but let me assure you he's still very much part of the team!

Notices

House Groups will meet as usual on Wednesday (Mrs Mortimer), Thursday (Mrs Harris) and Saturday (Lady Powell).

On Friday Mrs Follett will talk on "What Our Clothes Say About Us", 8pm Church Hall. (Everyone must be there! P.M.)

The Week Ahead

Monday. Join Social Chapter (Mr Cook in charge).

Tuesday. Ms Mowlam opens the Mission to Northern Ireland at St Gerry's.

Wednesday. There will be a full meeting of the new PCC in Church House for an address by the Vicar, supported by Mr Prescott from the Working Men's Club.

Thursday. Ms Short will be launching her new outreach programme for the Third World.

N.B. If you want to see the vicar and ask him any questions, he is available at any time, i.e. Wednesdays between 3.00 and 3.30. *(I know this marks a change from my predecessor's practice but I think you'll see this gives us all more time to have a proper chat! Tony.)*

Our New Vicar

by Mr Mandelson

No one is more pleased than I am that we've finally got Tony installed as our new incumbent. I don't mind saying that it is entirely thanks to me that he is where he is today. The main thing now is that we all work as a team, and if anyone's got any problems, they come and talk to me first. We don't want any of the sort of unpleasantness that this parish has had in the recent past! Believe you me, there are plenty of people out there who are only too ready to knock us for our beliefs, whatever they are. So, it is very important that no one does anything until the PCC (that's me basically!) gives them the go-ahead. I want you all to remember that!

P.M.

A Spring Morning

Verses by a local poet

The long darkness is over!
The winter of fascism is at an end!
Thank God (if he exists)!
The cherry trees are pink with blossom!
Birds are singing!
The sun shines!
Hats off to Tony!

H. Pinter (93)

The Parish Newsletter is edited by Alistair Campbell. No outside contributions welcome.

From The Referendum Bunker

No 94: A Final Bulletin To My Millions Of Followers

Achtung!

So. Everybody. You think you have seen the last of me.

But I tell you. We were not defeated.

We were betrayed. By the people of Britain. Who were stupid enough to give their votes to everyone but me.

And the media were just as bad. They all betrayed me too. All of them.

Except of course my loyal henchman Taki.

He alone courageously supported my cause to the end. Which is probably why we lost.

(Presses button which throws swarthy Greek tennis player into huge vat of boiling Marmite filled with killer whitebait – the property of the J. Aspinall Whitebait Experience, Margate)

And now, my dear Carla, we are alone.

(Turns round to find that ageing, mini-skirted temptress has defected to New Labour, leaving note:)

Darling Jimmy,
It was a great party but it's all over. Now I have found a better one and my heart belongs to Peter. I have gone off to our victory celebrations at the Festival Hall. Don't be angry, Jimmy. Che sera, sera.

Yours unfaithfully,
Carla Power-Mad.

(Sir Jammy strokes white powder in capsule)

I have here a cyanide pill. I am sure all of you expect me to swallow it. But you are wrong Mr Bond, Mr Major, Mr Blair, Mr Ashdown, Mr Middle England.

You are fools, all of you. Do you hear me?

I am not finished. Not by a long way. One day I will be back. And in the meantime I shall be watching you from my secret hideaway on the comet Hale-Bopp.

Goodbye. Or should I say Auf Wiedersehen Schweinhunden.

(Climbs into Tardis and disappears into cyber-reality to sound of Theme from Silence of the Jams)

WORLD OF CLASSICS

FREAK SHOW OR STAR TURN? CONTROVERSY RAGES

by Our Music Staff **Peter Mendelson**

THERE WAS furious criticism yesterday over a performance in the Royal Festival Hall by the so-called virtuoso politician Tony Helfblair, the star of the recent autobiographical film "Smile".

Traditionalists said that Helfblair was *not* a world-class performer and that his technique, phrasing and interpretation were all well below the standards required of a top-ranking statesman. "It is nothing more than a freakshow," said the Daily Telegraph, "cynically stage-managed by slick marketing men with no standards at all."

Fans, however, gave Helfblair a standing ovation. "It's the most inspiring recovery we have ever seen," said one. "He is totally uplifting."

Most of those present felt that "Smile" had been such a "feelgood" story that it was unfair to criticise Tony for minor mistakes, inconsistencies and a slight tendency to rattle through the tricky bits in the hope that no one would notice.

The Helfblair world tour continues in Amsterdam later this month.

That New Labour Ministers' Briefing Lunch in full

No One in the Soup (Campbells)

— ❋ —

No Egg on Face

— ❋ —

No Beef with No Leaks and Unspilt Beans

— ❋ —

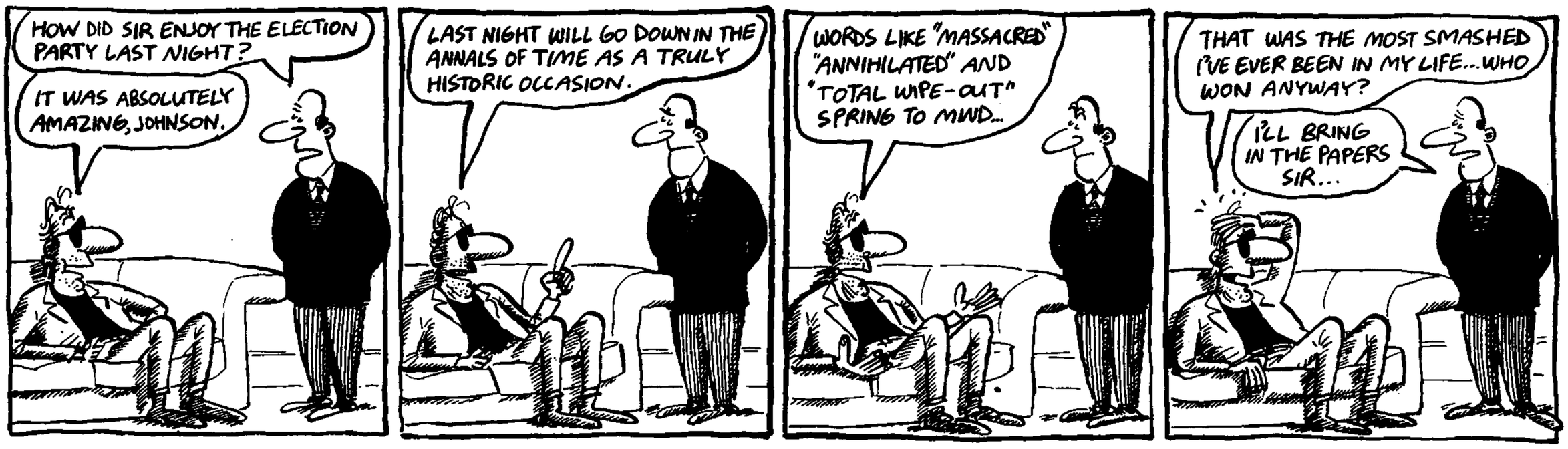
Hard Cheese

— ❋ —

To drink:
Nothing

Celeb

LIGGER


HOW DID SIR ENJOY THE ELECTION PARTY LAST NIGHT?
IT WAS ABSOLUTELY AMAZING, JOHNSON.
LAST NIGHT WILL GO DOWN IN THE ANNALS OF TIME AS A TRULY HISTORIC OCCASION.
WORDS LIKE "MASSACRED" "ANNIHILATED" AND "TOTAL WIPE-OUT" SPRING TO MIND...
THAT WAS THE MOST SMASHED I'VE EVER BEEN IN MY LIFE... WHO WON ANYWAY?
I'LL BRING IN THE PAPERS SIR...

'DEEP BLUE' TO BE NEW TORY LEADER

by Our Political Staff **Phil Space**

SCIENTISTS were delighted last night at the success of their artificially intelligent computer, Mr John Redwood, known as "Deep Blue".

Deep Blue is programmed to think of 200 million ridiculous policies every second and demolish any stratagems put forward by a human opponent.

One defeated opponent, Mr Michael Howard, who was beaten in two moves, complained that Deep Blue was cheating.

"It is unfair," he said. "Deep Blue is reprogrammed before every press conference. You never know what he's going to say. Some of his moves are incredibly childish and the others are so complicated that you cannot understand him.

"Also I am very tired at the moment," continued Howard, "after staying up all night drinking champagne with Mr Hague."

How They Are Related (or not)

Hughie Green

Sir Hugh Carlton-Green
|
Sir Hughie Green
|
Hughie Grant
|
Huey
|
Dewey
|
Louie
|
Louis Armstrong-Jones

Paula Yates

W.B. Yeats
|
Jess Yates
|
Helene Bosman
|
Helen Bosman-Carter
|
Noel Botham-Carter
|
Ian Botham
|
Paul McCartney

Louis Armstrong-Jones —— *m.* —— Paul McCartney
|
Paul Yates

©News of the World

The Stage

★ Top TV Double Act *'The Sleazies'*

Following their barnstorming performance on *Have I Got Sleaze For You*, *The Moral Sleaze*, and *Killmartinbell (surely 'Kilroy'? Ed.)*, Neil and Christine Hamilton are available for advertising voice-overs, corporate training films, children's parties, bar-mitzvahs, supermarket openings, interviews with Lord Deedes in the Telegraph, libel actions, karaoke nights, and now

Sleaz-o-Grams
0898 74732

Just call up the Hamiltons and they will come to *your* private function and amaze your guests by their sleaziness!

'The Sleazies'

Agent: Ian Greed of Greed Associate.

"A liar and a cheat," **The Guardian**

"I loved his crazy Hitler impersonation," **J. Sweeney, The Observer**

"Thanks to the Sleazies' wonderful double-act, I won a seat in parliament," **M. Bell**

(That's enough quotes. Ed.)

New Labour — New Glenda * * * * * The Gal Who Is Hitting The Sack Running (Geddit!?!) * * * * * * *

GLENDA SLAGG

CHERIE Blair — Aren'tchasickofher! If I see one more shot of Cherie a-grinnin' and a-gawpin' like some gargoyle that's fallen off the church roof I think I'll throw up!?! Go on, clear off Cherie!? Get back to your courtroom and leave the rest of us to enjoy breakfast in peace!?!

CHERIE Blair — Don'tchaluvher?! A working mother who knows how to stand by her man as well?!! With her sexy wig and expensive briefs (geddit?!!) she's a shining example to every gal in town of how a modern missus can have it all?!! I judge this Juicy QC to be the best First Lady we've ever had!?!! (Geddit!?) All stand!?!!

HATS off to David Helfgott!?! — Mr Shine, stoopid!?! OK, so he's bonkers and can't play the piano! Who cares!? I'd rather watch dishy David a-mutterin' and a-splutterin', a-hummin' and a-strummin', a-twinklin' and a-tinklin' (Get on with it. Ed.) over the Rachmaninov than some bow-tied bore in a dinner jacket any day!?! Mmm!?! Shine on me, mister, you ain't helf gott what it takes!? Geddit!?!!!

SEEN the English Patient yet?! Z-z-z-z-z-z-!?!! Put me out of my misery, doctor, and give us the morphine!?!!

HERE they are, Glenda's own Blair Babes!?!

● **Frank Dobson** — the new Health Minister!? With his bushy beard and roly-poly eyes, there'll be no waiting list for my bed?! Geddit?!

● **Dr Jack Cunningham** — M-m-m-minister for Agriculture!? OK, so he's been sidelined, but here's one mad cow who still thinks he's sexy!!?!!

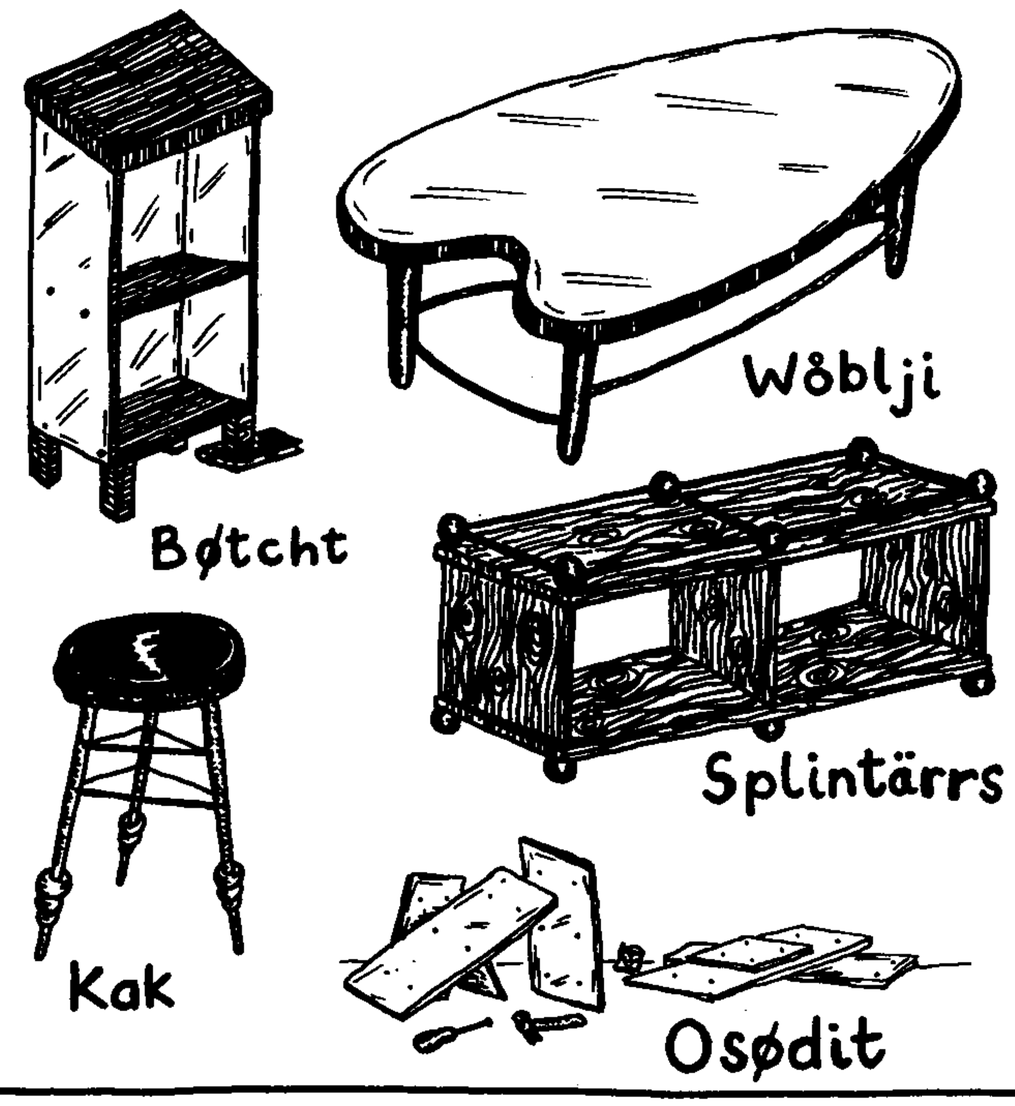
● **Lord Irvine of Lairg!** Crazee name, crazee appointment *(surely 'guy'? Ed.)*

Byeeee!!!

Apparently...

BY MIKE BARFIELD

SWEDISH SELF-BUILD FURNITURE



■ **TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT**
Sales of lost and unclaimed property - umbrellas by the thousand, handbags, briefcases, overcoats, filofaxes, books, abandoned children, etc.
Government Auctions Guide

The bad old days

Children's Corner

New Labour Guide To The New Britain

No. 94: Trade Unions

A TRADE union is a body which has nothing whatever to do with the Labour Government. In the bad old days workers ganged up on bosses to demand silly things like a living wage and better living conditions.

Once they got what they wanted the union bosses became the most powerful people in the land. They wore top hats and drank champagne, while the poor bosses starved to death in the streets. But luckily all that changed when Tony Blair became leader of the New Labour Party. The trade unions were put firmly in their place, the bosses were all given jobs in the government and everyone lived happily ever after.

Typical Trade Unions include the CBI, the IoD and the Civil Service First Division.

Harry Enfield's **Bores** Drawn by **Michael Heath**

12. Call Me Old-Fashioned

"I mean young people today I despair of them have you heard their music? it's all noise call me old fashioned but when we were young we had good music like Pink Floyd and Jefferson Airplane with proper tunes I don't know how they can bear listening to all this Shouty B. and Smelly D. can't they remember their proper names? Rory Gallagher now that was a proper name and acid that was a proper drug this Ecstasy's an evil menace I'd hang the pushers they've got no get up and go, this generation, it's all me me me and lying around in bed all day in my day we got on our bikes and *looked* for somewhere to lie down and smoke dope I mean we had a philosophy 'turn on tune in and drop out' what philosophy have this lot got? 'Commit bloody crime!' my BMW was scratched the other day mindless vandalism all this Swampy nonsense I stand to lose a lot of business if Manchester airport doesn't expand you can't understand a word they say these days everything's either 'Wicked' or 'Bad' or 'Safe' they don't know the meaning of the words 'totally far out man' we had leaders of vision like the Bhagwan and later good old Maggie nowadays it's all Liam Gallagher bloody yobbo bring back National Service I say..."

Introducing Britain's Newest Fanzine

BLAIRZONE

Everything you need to know about Britain's most popular Band

> "I am a modern man," he proclaimed on Tuesday night. "I am part of the rock and roll generation — the Beatles, colour TV, that's the generation I come from." *DAILY TELEGRAPH*

Message from Tony (lead singer of Blairzone)

HEY! Wow! This is some gig, eh? But I couldn't have got where I am without you! — the fans! No really. But as the late, great Freddy Mercury put it, "We are the champions, my friends, and we'll go on fighting 'till the end."

And just 'cos we're top of the hit parade doesn't mean we're going to sit back and take it easy! As the late great Barry Ryan said, "Gotta get up, gotta get up" on the B-side of "Don't live if living is without you". Right on Barry.

And hey listen — me and the band are going to put together a really new sound. Not so new that you don't like it but more a sort of classical Progroddyrock fusion sound — like Mr Barclay's James Harvest's "Galadriel" — remember that? Rock and roll!

Love ya,
Tony

Tony Fax File

❶ *Tony has 200 pairs of shoes.*

❷ *When on tour Tony likes to chill out with the roadies and crack open a bottle of Veuve Cliquot 1993!!*

❸ *Tony's top influences are Guns 'n' Roses, Led Zep, Showaddywaddy and Archbishop William Temple's Christianity and the Social Order!!*

❹ *Tony's guitar is a Stratosfender 74 with double slide wah-wah handle. He also owns a recorder and a xylophone!?!*

❺ *Tony's favourite colour is (Deep) Purple.*

Tony Thinx!

Tony and the boys from Blairzone are not just pretty faces (though they are, girls!!) — they've got a whole philosophy of life, which Tony describes as "Walkin' on Sunshine" in the words of the late, great Katrina and the Waves.

Tony Lixe

Babes
Flares
An Independent Bank of England

Tony Dislixe

Drugs
Hip-Hop
Ministers having briefing lunches with journalists

Groupie Heaven (or as the late great band Sailor put it, "Girls, girls, girls"!!)

Eurosceptic Song Contest

Los Referendos (Mexico)
Taki, taki, taki — Nul points

Los Portillos (España)
Manana finita — Nul points

Teresa (Gormany)
I'm Crazy About Me — Deux points

Johnny Vulcan (Mars) *Redwood the Red-Nosed Twit* — Quatre points

Billy Cash (Little England)
I'll Always Walk Alone — Nul points

Charlie Moore and His Fogeymen (Canary Wharf Islands)
The Eton Voting Song — Nul points

SUPERMODELS

KERBER

JOBSEEKERS Crème de la Brûlée AN EYE SERVICE

Spanish-speaker, 45, with Cambridge degree, some experience public speaking, has appeared on TV, seeks full-time employment, possibly in defence industry. Anything considered. Box: Xavier 1.

Live-in couple, formerly Cheshire-based, with long experience in hotel business (inc. Ritz, Paris). Cash-only offers in region of £500,000 p.a. Box: Tatton 2.

Brother of former Prime Minister, 57, well-known author and newspaper columnist, with own mobile phone, finds himself unexpectedly available for night-club evenings, garden ornament conventions etc. Box: Terry 3.

Duplicitous Old Etonian, brother of Earl, will consider any directorships over £250,000. Experience of arms sales, official enquiries and fish. Also available for functions as butler, with wife doubling as cook. Box: Wargrave 5.

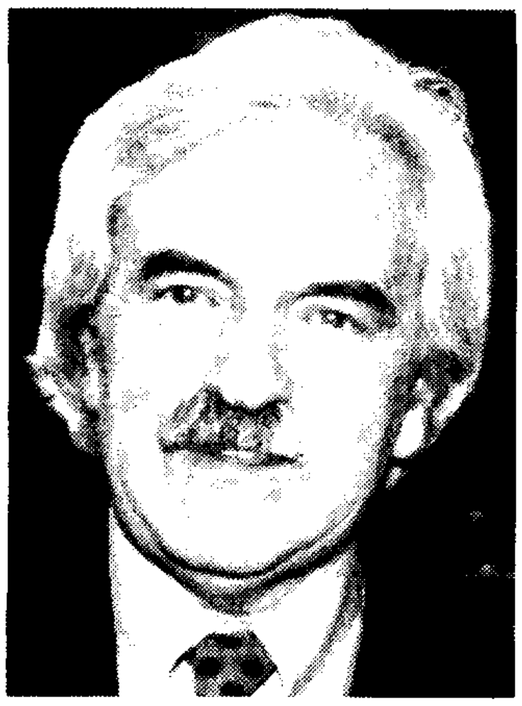
Spywriter, 33, desperately seeks someone to sue after unfortunate reversal of fortune. Wife, blonde violinist and four houses to support. Box: Gonewest 6.

The Lady Olga Maitland wishes it to be known that she is now considering a career move, due to a recent unforeseen change in her circumstances. Send generously please to Distressed Elderly Gentlefolk's Association, Sutton and Cheam. Box: Olgmait 4.

Self-publicist and best-selling author ("dirty bits a speciality"), 55, with experience of eggs, very keen on Europe, finds herself unjustifiably in search of work due to the spineless incompetence of everyone except herself. Will do absolutely anything to keep name in papers. Box: Eggwina 999.

Edinburgh-born lawyer, 51, with experience in foreign affairs, now available to do his famous Dalek impersonation at children's parties. Box: Rifkind 7.

200 more appear on pages 94-206.



The New Look Proms!

Hi! I'm Des Lynam. And I'm here to introduce this year's new Proms.

Guess what the First Night's going to look like!

Turn up the volume and let's prom!

Programme in Full

Nocturne by Freddie Chopin *(arr. Lloyd Webber)*

Nessun Dorma sung by Nigel Kennedy.

The Spice Girls' Greatest Hits sung by the BBC Singers.

Interval

Symphony No. 94 (The Excruciating) Gustav Mahler

BBC Youth Symphony Orchestra conducted by Sir Paul McCartney.

Programme devised by Nick Kenyon (Proms 'R Us)

Coming later in the season, Prom Premieres for the following artists: Schnittke's Concerto for 14 Violas, Frank Zappa's Motherfuckers Get Stoned, Bach's B-Minor Mass *(arr. Sex Pistols).*

POETRY CORNER

In Memoriam
Sir John Junor

So. Farewell
Then John
Junor. Columnist
And Editor.

What was
Your catchphrase?

I think
We should
Be told*.

E.J. Thribb (17½)

***Poet's Footnote**: *These final lines are intentionally ambiguous. I appear to be asking what Sir John's catchphrase was, but this* is *what it was — i.e. I think we should be told. (E.J.T.)*

The Observer

THE PAPER FOR THE NEW ERA

SUNDAY 4 MAY 1997

Goodbye, xenophobia *(surely 'readers'? Ed.)*

by Editor Will Hutton, author of *What A State I'm In.*

BLISS it was today to be alive, and to look out of the window to see a shining New Britain rising out of the fog of the last thousand years was very heaven (writes Will Hutton, best-selling author of *What A State The Observer's In*).

THE DAY THE ABSURDER WENT BONKERS

1. Gotcha Portillo, you Spanish git.

2. An end to xenophobia.

3. Xenophobia, the new Spice Girl, talks to Lynn Barbie.

4. Er...

5. That's it.

Late News

Observer Man Runs Amok In Prime Minister's Entourage

LAST night a leading newspaper editor, Mr Will Hutton, admitted being "high on Ecstasy, after staying up all night doing the Big E (the Election)".

"It was like fireworks going off in my head," he said. "It was like the biggest orgasm in the history of the universe.

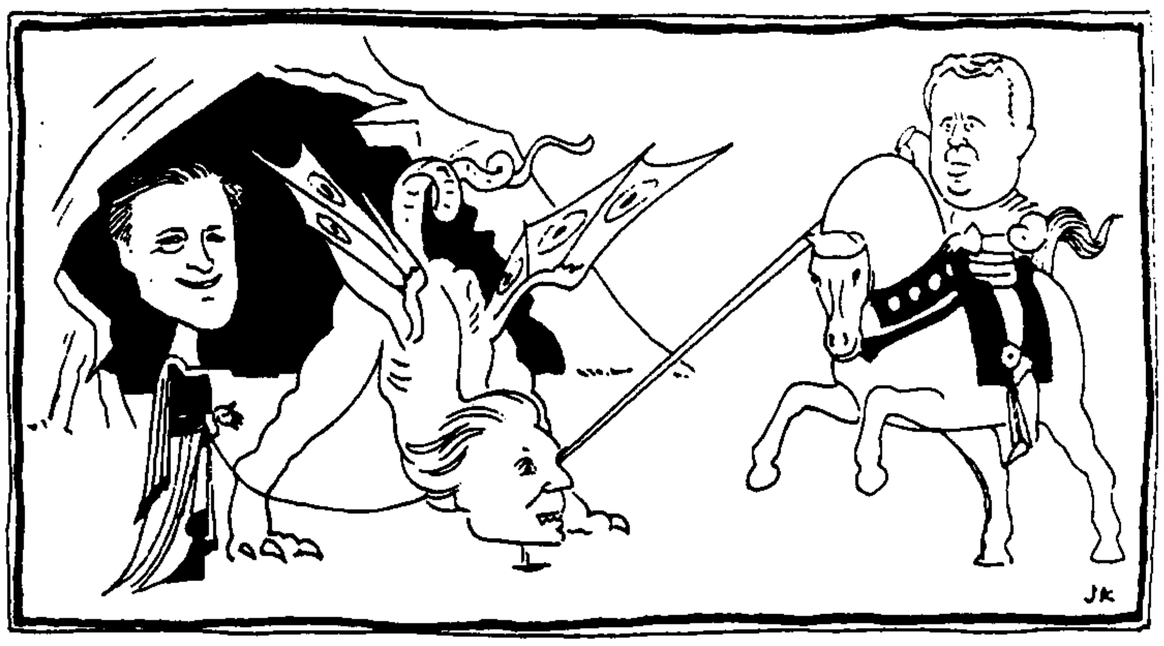
"I could feel the xenophobia ebbing away and being replaced by an incredible nirvana of love, love, love.

"All night millions of ordinary Britons, like Salman Rushdie and Ben Pimlott, danced openly in the streets, swilling champagne, and writing pieces in this newspaper about how this was the most wonderful thing that had ever happened to mankind."

Mr Hutton was led away gibbering by policemen and charged with injecting huge doses of nonsense into the pages of his newspaper. He later admitted "headlining" xenophobia.

Mr Will Self is fired.

Lives of the Saints



St Martin slays the dragon (Paulo Ucello)

No. 94: St Martin of Bell

IN THE last days of King John the Useless, the land of Albion was struck by a great plague of sleaze. Everywhere was infected and the people knew not whither to turn. And, worst of all, a mighty dragon appeared in the forests of Tatton, dragging behind her an obedient slave called Neil. And the people cried "Who will save us?" But no one came forward, no not one. Then finally there stepped out a knight in shining white linen, who was called Martin. "Good folk," he said. "I have heard of your plight even in the distant land of Bosnia. And I have come to rescue you in your hour of distress." And he showed the people his wounds and his beautiful daughter. And they were overjoyed. Then Martin sallied forth to face the dragon, completely unarmed. And the dragon scorched him with her fire. And Martin said nothing, but sent his white suit to the cleaners. And when it was returned he sallied forth again, armed this time with some old cuttings from the Grauniad.

The votes were cast as follows:

Hamilton, N. (Conservative) 2

Hamilton, C. (Dragon) 10,412

Bell, M. (Anti-Sleaze and Dragonslaying Alliance) 32,841

The returning officer duly recorded that Mr Bell was elected to serve as a saint for the next five years. And from that day forth he took a vow of silence, for he had nothing further to say.

NEXT WEEK: St Mo of Mowlam.

ENTIRE TORY PARTY THROW HATS IN RING

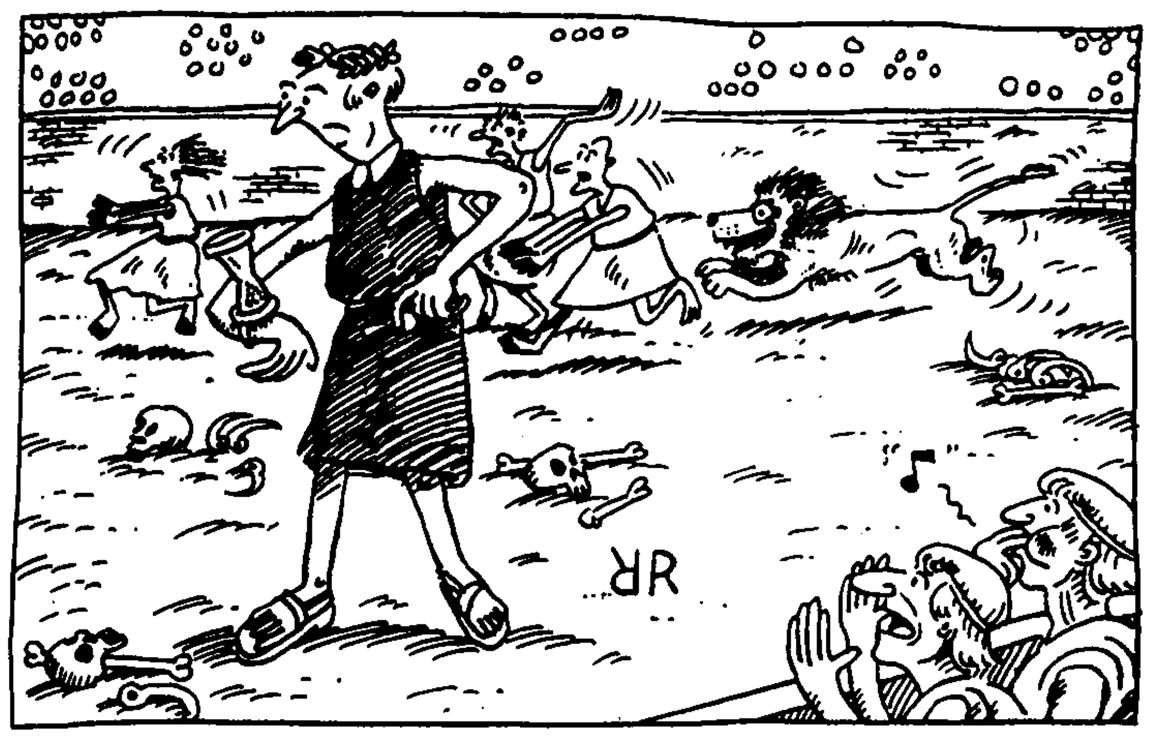
by Our Political Staff **Phil Space**

ALL the surviving 13 Tory MPs today declared their intention to stand as leader of what remains of the Conservative Party.

In various hotels around central London, a number of pasty-faced men in suits, some with glasses, some without, made the following speech:

"It is absolutely vital that we learn the lessons of the recent past, and go forward into the future as a united party, without recrimination or dwelling too much on the recent past. I am the only candidate who can bring together all sections of the party in a spirit of constructive conciliation. All the other candidates are weak, spineless yesterday's men, who were entirely responsible for our defeat. Vote for me."

Those candidates in full: John Deadwood, Kenneth Sharke, Stephen Drivel, William Vague, Peter Silley, Michael Coward *(continued pp 94, 95, 96, etc)*.



DIARY

March 18th 1974. The Queen Mother is no beauty, bless her. She is even, dare I say it, a bit *common*, with a perfectly ghastly habit of interrupting one when one is talking of subjects beyond her. Bidden to luncheon at Clarence House — a reasonably serviceable London *pied-à-terre*, if fearfully ugly — I suspect I rather frightened her with my compelling mixture of historical erudition, intellectual breadth, conversational agility and sheer *razzle-dazzle*. But she was obviously so thrilled to talk to me that one can forgive her much, if not everything.

Thank heavens for my rare *panache*. I held the table — a dull philosopher and his dreary wife; a ghastly, spineless politician (possibly the Prime Minister?) and his equally ghastly wife; a couple of vulgarly famous film stars and a boorish poet — utterly spellbound with all the latest gossip from the Victoria and Albert Museum. Apparently, the Keeper of Ceramics has fallen out with the Under-Keeper of Miniatures after hearing that one of the Secretaries in Stuffed Animals had mentioned that the Director of Engravings had taken a dislike to an early work by the Assistant Director of Porcelain.

Inevitably, this news rendered the table speechless. It was the Queen Mother who was the first to chip in. Alas, she was desperately muddled.

"And apparently they all absolutely *loathe* the new Director," she said. "They say he's a self-serving, publicity-mad, social-climbing ponce."

"Correction, ma'am!" I laughed. "You must be thinking of someone else. You see, *I* am the new Director!"

Poor dear, she gets her names very mixed up these days. The food, incidentally, was filthy. Needless to say, I received many admiring glances for my broad-brimmed scarlet fedora and purple crushed velvet knickerbockers, not unmixed with a certain amount of envy from the ladies.

June 7th 1980: HRH The Princess of Wales, Princess Alexandra, HM The Queen, Lord Charteris, Lady Antonia Fraser, Lady Hartwell, President Giscard d'Estaing, Jackie Onassis, Sir Isaiah Berlin, The Duke and Duchess of Buccleuch, Lord Rothschild: how they all admire one, and how well they look in one's index.

July 12th 1983: The new Pope has no taste in clothes. Whatever virtues he has, dress sense is

SIR ROY STRONG

not one of them. Doesn't the poor poppet realise that crucifixes are *passé* and that (*don't*) stiff white collars are dreadfully *sixties*?

I have served close-on a decade now at the V&A. It is widely recognised that I have achieved more than any other human being of my own or other generations in any field, at any time. My "Voici La Roy" exhibition was an outstanding success, and Princess Margaret was not alone in deeming my lavish "Cravats from the Strong Collection" one of the most memorable exhibitions of cravats she had ever set eyes on.

But time marches on, and I feel I must seek pastures new. Many close friends have suggested that the Papacy is quite simply *crying out* for a candidate of my calibre to knock it into some sort of style. Norman (St John Stevas) says he will have a word with Grey (Gowrie) to persuade Peter (Carrington) to put my name forward to his good friends in the Vatican.

Of course, the whole thing needs a thorough overhaul. As Pope, my first action would be to improve the food. Even a few dabs of *salsa verde* would perk up those wafers no end, and the house wine is at present *execrable*. And then I would set about the clothes. I have been thinking of Regency velvet jackets, ruffled shirts and dreamy flared crushed-velvet loon-pants for my Cardinals, and black damask skirted jackets with high side-vents and turtle-necks for my Bishops. I wonder whether one could persuade HRH Princess Margaret to act as one's Papal Nuncio to Belgravia and surrounding parishes? I must have a word with Princess Michael, to see what she thinks.

May 17th 1979: To a finger-supper with the blessed Sir Harold Acton at *La Pietra*. Tony Snowdon in a lime-green *blouson* with high-standing sleeves, tightly waisted matelot jacket and sky-blue brushed silk *pantalons*. Dicky Buckle collars me and says that Binkie Beaumont really hates Cecil Beaton. Later, Binkie Beaumont shepherds me into a corner to tell me that Cecil Beaton really hates Dicky Buckle. As brandy is served (certainly *not* five star) Cecil asks if he can have a word. Apparently, Dicky Buckle really hates Binkie Beaumont. And they all really hate Harold.

A divine evening of friendship and warmth in the company of angels. Ascending *les escaliers* to my room, I realise that I forgot to tell them that the Assistant Keeper of Manuscripts has fallen out — and *most severely* — with the Curator of the Chinese Collection. Ah well — it will be something to surprise them with tomorrow.

March 5th 1995. A fearfully busy time in the gardener's yearbook. Our own *jardin* is home to twenty-two varieties of different leek, all planted in such a way as to echo the distinctive shape of my moustaches. I am a great one for monuments. People say that I am a monomaniac, but these are strictly divided between my own achievements (three and a half acres) and those of the rest of the world (quarter of an acre). One also has special tombs to one's darling dear departed pussies — The Reverend Wenceslas Muff, His Grace the Rt Rev Raving Woofter, Archdeacon Silly Wanker and Prebendary Raddled Old Twat — alongside commemorative beds to my very dear friends HRH Princess Margaret (33 varieties of stinging nettle) and Sir John Pope-Hennessy (compost heap). In the far corner, there's an abundant hedge, skilfully cropped to form an exact replica of Michelangelo's David, though with the addition of a beautiful, droopy moustache, ravishing shoulder-length hair and distinctive circular spectacles.

Recently, I have extended my *jardin* away from the limits of the grounds to a commemorative plantation on my face. The crop of sweet peas in the area between my lips and my much-admired nose is coming along famously, though it's still early days for the brussels sprouts seeding in my silvery locks. Not long now, and I shall have to open myself to the general public. "Circumspice" is my motto. Or should that be "Circumspivvy"?

"Oh no! Lopez has fallen asleep at the wheel!"

A GRIEVING family have been laying flowers on the wrong grave for four years.

And yesterday, council bosses admitted it could be one of six blunders at Uphall Cemetery in West Lothian.

A woman noticed her aunt being lowered into the wrong grave in 1993 and was assured the body would be moved.

West Lothian cemeteries boss Howard Dawson admitted: "I believe this was covered up."

Scottish Daily Record

Literary Review

Cock and bum story

The Farewell Symphony
Edmund White
(Chatto, £16.99)

EDMUND White's 500-page whopper of a novel takes its title from the Haydn work in which the musicians leave the stage one by one until a single violinist plays. This is White's metaphor for the decimation of his generation of gay American men by Aids: the novel's theme. But the title is also appropriate to a book which contains more sucking and blowing than any work of art outside of classical music.

Gay Lit has had three distinct phases. In the first half of the century, there was disguise and denial: represented by the coded characters and sly references of Maugham, Rattigan and Coward. From the 1960s until the late 1970s, it was legal but discreet. With the exception of the occasional mainstream gay novel, such as Gore Vidal's *The City And The Pillar* or James Baldwin's *Another Country*, same-sex texts were largely restricted to specialist publishers and dusty low-down shelves in the trendier bookshops. In the 1980s — beginning with the success of Edmund White's *A Boy's Own Story* — the gay novel went prize-winning and Book Club-choice. Even sleepy Britain, in the early 1990s, elected an explicitly homosexual book by an "out" writer — Alan Hollinghurst's *The Folding Star* — to the Booker Prize shortlist.

Now comes (a word, incidentally, which appears on most of its pages) Edmund White's *The Farewell Symphony*. This is the big one (a phrase, incidentally, which appears on many of its pages). White has tried to write The Great Gay American Novel, a queer War And Peace.

The Farewell Symphony is probably the most sexually energetic book to be published without being seized by Customs. White has claimed in interviews to have had sex with at least 3,200 men and he has clearly remembered their shapes if not their names. There is the guy with "foreskin so tight it wouldn't roll back". Or the chap with the "long clean cock rising up out of a blond's light cloud of brown pubic hair dusting an unusually red scrotum". Then the New York pick-up whose "ass was his glory. A trail of fur descended his spine towards his crack and then hair began again under his big, firm buns, but those twin globes were as hairless and pale as the moon by day".

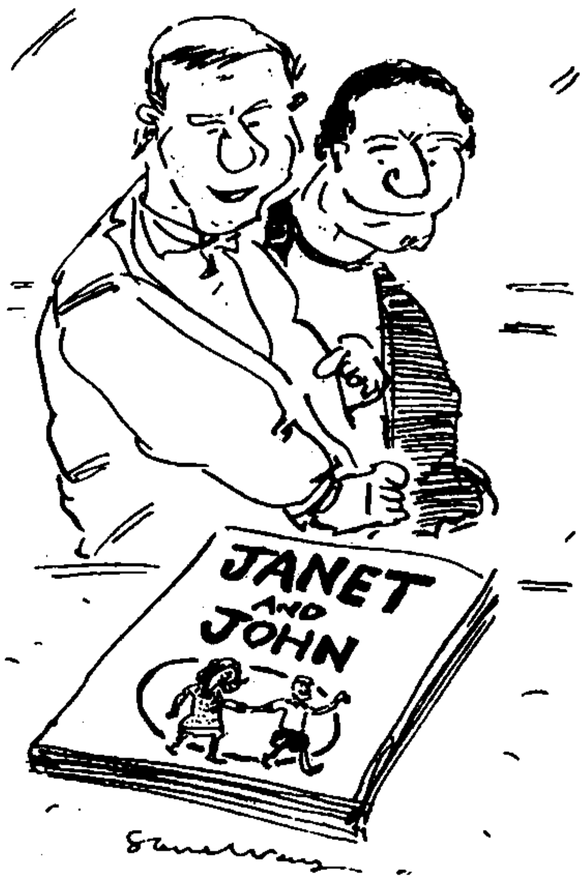
White might point out, with some justice, that John Updike, for example, has described vaginas in just as much detail and that it is the reader's latent homophobia which makes these physical intimacies seem shocking. But what really lends *The Farewell Symphony* its distinction in the fiction of sex is the sheer volume and variety of the couplings.

At one point, White (for it seems that the narrator is he) takes time out to visit the clap doctor and the reader expects to be able to lie back for a couple of blandly functional paragraphs. But no. After injecting the narrator with "two horse shots of Penicillin", the doc invites White to penetrate him anally, finishing off the encounter with a protective antibiotic jab for himself.

Later, the narrator, after being diagnosed as HIV positive, penetrates an unwilling pick-up without protection. White wonders whether this constitutes rape and murder.

It is at this point that the book loses its claims — already tenuous — to be considered as a novel rather than a memoir. White is a fine writer — his similes are as pretty and his sentences as elegant as anything in modern fiction — but what he has written is not the Great Gay Novel but the Great Tell-All Book. This has in recent years become the most crowded genre in American letters, as the Oprah culture of lurid confession spills over into prose. Kathryn Harrison's *The Kiss*, recently published in Britain, seemed to be the ultimate example of this form: a book in which a woman revealed a four-year incestuous relationship with her father. Now, in a book which contains a confession of at least rape and probably manslaughter, White has trumped her. That he has called the book a novel is no defence, morally or legally.

The sadness of *The Farewell Symphony* is that it seems to be a gay book on straight terms. It presents homosexuality as something savage, other and shocking. It depicts a generation of precious food and decor bores who, with complete emotional irresponsibility, shagged each other to death, so that a work by America's foremost gay writer curiously exactly matches the prejudices of the anti-gay pundits.



"It's a book I've been meaning to read but I never got round to it"

BOOKS & BOOKMEN

■ *AUTHORS being asked to sign "novations" moving their Reed contracts to Random House — which earlier this year bought Reed imprints including Heinemann and Secker & Warburg — might well be put off doing so if they attempt to telephone their would-be new publisher.*

The Random House publicity departments, attempting to cope with the arrival of the new lists, are almost permanently engaged; callers wishing to leave messages are often frustrated even in that aim, because the message desk is getting bombarded with calls as well. The conclusion that chaos is reigning in Vauxhall Bridge Road is hard to avoid.

Lawrence Norfolk, author of the unreadable but prestigious Lemprière's Dictionary and The Pope's Rhinoceros, has already moved with his editor Neil Taylor to Hodder. He was apparently unmoved by the blandishments of Random House publisher Caroline Michel, whose charms were employed by Random in a last-ditch effort to get him to stay.

"Nicci French" — husband and wife team Sean French and Nicci Gerrard — have gone with their publishers Tom Weldon and Louise Moore to Michael Joseph. Weldon has also kept Robert Bauval and Graham Hancock, whose crackpot alternative histories like Keeper of Genesis have been huge money-spinners. Other departures are expected to be announced soon.

□ **WATERSTONES' image as the meanest and most grasping of the large book chains is improving steadily.**

A small private press, Eagle Feather, received a plea from a Waterstones branch manager last December to supply a copy of a book called *Captain Eros*. The book was urgently required for Christmas by a customer, so despite their reservations — Waterstones expect a discount of roughly 80 per cent — they sent off a copy.

Many phone calls and letters later, and with the season of goodwill well and truly over, the publisher has still not received payment.

The branch manager concerned now claims that the matter is out of his hands and all invoices should go to head office. And head office has yet to acknowledge the transaction at all.

■ LORD Rothermere is one of the most cultivated men in the land. Yet the prospect of living in a Bolshevik Britain, I fear, has temporarily unhinged the Great Helmsman of Associated Newspapers.

His Lordship rang one of his minions at the *Evening Standard* the other day and explained that he had a modest interior decorating problem, as he was moving his London home (being such a patriot, his main residence is in Paris).

"You have lots of review copies of books, don't you?" boomed the learned Rothermere. "Well, for my new house I need some volumes."

"Yessir," replied the lackey.

"Then send me 10ft of books immediately!" ordered his lordship.

□ *Meanwhile, at the Observer, these things are done differently under literary editor Robert McCrum.*

Like all newspapers, the Obs receives hundreds of books which it is unable to review — and which are then sold off to a secondhand bookseller. In other literary departments, these windfall profits are put into a bank account and used to top up the contributors' budget, hold occasional lunches for reviewers and so forth.

Not so apparently at the Observer. Since taking charge of the books section last year, colleagues claim that McCrum has been receiving a staggering £1,500 a month in cash from a dealer who collects the paper's unwanted review copies. (Is this possible? Ed.) Now that he understands the normal journalistic procedure McCrummie has of course promised that all future dosh will be paid into a proper bank account, under the supervision of managing editor Brian Whitaker. But where, grumble the contributors, is all the loot that has accumulated so far?

SNIPCOCK & TWEED
GOD I HATE LONDON! IT'S JUST A SPRAWLING MESS THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE TO GET THROUGH!
AND THAT'S JUST THE NOVEL!
LONDON

REMAINDERS OF THE DAY

■ **HARD times may be ahead for the Tories but the right-wing literary world, and in particular its biographers, has been feeling the gloom for some time.**

Michael Gove's book for Fourth Estate, *Michael Portillo: The Future of the Right*, seems to have as little future as its eponymous hero. Originally priced at a weighty £14.99 it was last seen in Bookcase in London at "Now only 99p".

'Bookworm'

footnotes

THEY THINK IT'S ALL OVERY (it isn't now)

PERHAPS the most expensive legacy bequeathed to the new ministers is a long legal action to decide whether the Tory government stole £200m from bus workers. Both sets of phenomenally expensive lawyers in the action will be paid for by the good old taxpayer.

In 1986, the publicly-owned National Bus Company was split up and flogged off to private bus companies. The huge pension fund was divided up, too, and the government generously guaranteed the payment of minimum pensions from it. This guarantee cost nothing.

The NBC pension fund had a healthy surplus of £168m. The Department of Transport coolly swiped this and buried it away in the Treasury. They might have got away with it but for a retired busman called Francis Wheeler. He reckoned that the surplus in the pension fund was the property of the pensioners. Though everyone told him he was wrong, he took the case to the Pensions Ombudsman, who is appointed by the government to resolve pensions disputes. To ministers' horror, the Ombudsman declared that Mr Wheeler was right, and that the trustees of the pension fund had acted "in breach of trust". He instructed the trustees to get the money from the Department of Transport and give it back to the pensioners.

The total sum stolen was, by this time, about £200m — about £1000 a year per pensioner. In his evidence to the House of Commons transport committee in March, Bill Morris, general secretary of the Transport and General Workers Union, estimated the average pension of his members who used to work for National Bus at £1500 a year. An extra £1000, he claimed, "is the difference between basic relative comfort and bare existence".

Who were the trustees who were ordered to get the money back from the Department of Transport? They were two officials in the Department of Transport. The union objected that conflicts might arise if two civil servants sued their own department. So the trustees were swiftly changed. The new ones were officials in another government department: the office of the Official Solicitor. Though they had been instructed by the Ombudsman to get the pensioners their £200m back, these officials bided their time until they got their orders from the government. Ministers eventually insisted that the pension fund swag was rightfully theirs and prepared to defend their case in court. But how could two penniless officials in the Official Solicitor's department sue the government for £200m? The answer came quick as a flash. The taxpayer would pay the legal costs of the trustees *and* the government. Thus instead of accepting the clear and well-tested legal opinion of their own Ombudsman, the Tory ministers started handing out cash to fund both sides of a mightily expensive and quite unnecessary law suit.

A further complication arose at once. From the start the lawyers who advised the trustees were the City's greatest and grandest, Allen and Overy. Though a new set of trustees were appointed to avoid conflict of interest, no one thought of changing the lawyers. So Allen and Overy, who had advised the original trustees that the government were entitled to the surplus, were now acting for the new trustees, whose job was to get the surplus out of the government. For quite a long time no one could see anything odd in this arrangement. But when it was exposed in March in the Transport Select Committee the Lord Chancellor's office finally intervened. Just before Parliament dissolved, the then junior minister at the Lord Chancellor's Office, Gary Streeter, announced that Allen and Overy "have now relinquished their retainer (with the trustees) as there is a potential conflict of interest". A new firm of City solicitors, Taylor Joynson Garrett, will now be instructed by the trustees.

John Major once wanted to be a bus conductor.

He didn't make it.
So what's he doing with a busman's pension?

A T&GWU CARTOON OF A FORMER VIP

Phantom of the Options 2

■ THE enormous advantages of "phantom share options", discussed in the last *Eye*, have not been lost on the directors of the advertising giant Cordiant, once better known as ad agency Saatchi and Saatchi.

BOB SEELERT

Cordiant's new accounts record: "In August 1995, chief executive Bob Seelert was granted a 'phantom option' over the equivalent of 487,131 shares in the company." He doesn't actually own the shares but is deemed to have them if he wants to cash them in.

The report goes on: "In April 1996, Mr Seelert was also granted a phantom share option over the equivalent of 540,538 ordinary shares in the company." Moreover, "Mr Seelert has a contractual entitlement to a grant of phantom share options in 1997 to the value of US$1,066,667.67".

The total value of all these shares he doesn't have is well over £2.5m, which Mr Seelert will cash in if the Cordiant share value rises. If it falls, of course, he never had any shares to sell — they were only phantoms. If Mr Seelert should ever leave Cordiant, his phantom options "immediately vest and become realisable" (ie, get paid in cash). The blow of losing his job will be cushioned further by "an amount equal to 280 per cent of his (£512,000) salary plus an additional three years' retirement contributions". All these phantom share options, are piled on top of Mr Seelert's run-of-the-mill "executive share options" whose "exercise value" is £1,367,000.

The generous rates of pay and bonus for Cordiant's executive directors are fixed by a remuneration committee made up entirely of non-executive directors. These non-executives have to make ends meet on a mere £20,000 a year, but they do get paid extra if they go to board or committee meetings. If they can get there in person, they get £600 a time, which is reduced to £500 if they "attend by telephone" (an extension of the phantom concept).

The most famous of the non-executives is Dudley Fishburn, the former Tory MP for Kensington. Mr Fishburn tops up his £20,000 from Cordiant with another £17,000 as non-executive director of a firm called Business Post and a much larger undisclosed sum for his directorship of Delaware-based Household International.

DUD FISHER , ex-MP

Will three jobs be enough for Mr Fishburn? He announced last year that he was leaving Parliament because there wasn't enough to do.

GREAT CHIEF SECRETARY QUIZ

Questions:
Can you name three former chief secretaries to the Treasury who gave evidence to the Scott inquiry and didn't emerge too well as a result? What happened to them on 1 May?

Answers:
1) David Mellor, chief secretary 1990-92: **OUT** at Putney; Labour majority 2,976.
2) Jonathan Aitken, chief secretary 1994-95: **OUT** at Thanet South; Labour majority 2,878.
3) William Waldegrave, chief secretary 1995-97: **OUT** at Bristol West; Labour majority 1,493.

THE BRIDGEWATER APPEAL

LINDA LA PLANT

DAMAGE limitation is the order of the day at the Appeal Court hearing into the Carl Bridgewater murder. QCs for the Crown Jeremy Roberts and William Coker concede that the 1979 convictions of James Robinson, Pat Molloy, Vincent Hickey and Michael Hickey are unsafe, and that Pat Molloy, now dead, and Michael Hickey should not even have been charged.

For this sensational injustice, however, Messrs Roberts and Coker blame a "small team" of police officers. They argue that the judges, the senior police officers and all the lawyers behaved impeccably.

The men's lawyers do not agree. Alun Jones QC, for Vincent Hickey, produced startling new evidence about a crucial alibi witness, Vincent's former girlfriend Linda Galvin.

Both Vincent and Michael Hickey claimed they were in Linda Galvin's Birmingham flat at or near the time the newspaper boy was shot. When this was first put to Linda after the men's arrests, she reckoned Vincent had not arrived at her flat until later in the evening. The police seized on this as proof that Vincent's alibi was false.

LINDA GALVIN, May 1979

But she wasn't sure. Mr Jones read out a police telephone message which has never before been disclosed. Its author was Det Sgt Langley of the Staffordshire police, who went to Linda's flat on 4 May 1979 to check on her evidence to the hearing to commit the four men for trial. Langley's conclusion from the conversation was rather shattering. "Linda," he reported, "cannot remember (about Vincent's alibi), but her daughter says: 'Yes, he was here'." The daughter Stephanie, then 13, clearly remembered two other incidents that day which she linked to Vincent's presence when she came home from school. Yet Sgt Langley's message revealed: "Linda thinks that she talked her daughter out of Vinny being at home when she came home from school and she has therefore said that she wasn't, to go along with what Linda said."

Stephanie got home from school at almost exactly the time the newspaper boy was shot some 20 miles away. As Mr Jones pointed out, this was the plainest possible evidence that a witness was persuaded to change vital alibi evidence. This should, said Mr Jones, have led to immediate police inquiries into a possible perversion of the course of justice.

Attached to DS Langley's message is a note that it was seen by the head of the murder inquiry, DCS Robert Stewart. The *Eye* wrote to Mr Stewart via GCHQ, where he was for many years after his retirement in 1985 an investigator in the security department. The *Eye* set out the new message about Linda Galvin and put three questions to Mr Stewart:

1) Do you recall getting this information?

2) If so, what action did you take in response to the suggestion that one witness "talked" another out of a clear recollection which, if true, amounted to a cast-iron alibi?

3) Was Linda Galvin warned about any attempt to pervert the course of justice by seeking to change her daughter's recollection of her testimony?

Any answers received from Mr Stewart will be passed on.

Linda Galvin did not give evidence at the trial although she gave 19 statements to the police (four of which were not disclosed to the defence). She was a key witness at the committal hearing and was listed as a prosecution witness. Explaining his decision not to call her at the trial, chief prosecutor Philip Cox said there was a "grave risk that she may say 'oh, yes, I remember him coming back at half past three' and give chapter and verse as to why she did remember it".

The "grave risk" that she might give a defendant an alibi was reason enough not to call her. Cox's decision was upheld by the trial judge, Mr Justice Drake, and six top judges in two sessions of the Court of Appeal, all acting impeccably. Mr Roberts for the Crown now hints that Linda wasn't called because she was being "got at" by the Hickey family. This is piffle. If there was any suggestion that a witness was being "got at" by anyone, the court should have been told that the witness could no longer be trusted. No such suggestion was even hinted at.

Shortly before the appeal in 1988, two Staffordshire policemen paid a courtesy call to Linda Galvin. She surprised them by asking: "Why are these men still trying to get off, because one of them had the lad's watch didn't they? That Carl Bridgewater, one of them had his watch." How did she know that, the officers asked. "A policewoman told me," she replied. "I can't remember her name but at the time she was such a nice woman. She used to bring me fags every day and clean underwear..."

The story that Carl's watch had been stolen was nonsense — the watch was taken off the boy's body at the post-mortem. So who was the mysterious policewoman who put such a false and incriminating notion in the head of a vital witness? So far, Messrs Roberts and Coker have not identified her. Indeed, as the case continues into its third week, the suspicion mounts that the prosecution will not be calling a single one of the "small team" of police officers to answer for the injustice for which they are, apparently, solely responsible. Such a course of action can only be described as impeccable.

Sir Norman Foul-up

■ AT A meeting last month at Risley, Notts, representatives of 2000 former civil servants recalled the past ministerial triumphs of Sir Norman Fowler, one of the few Birmingham Tories to keep his seat.

When Sir Norman was employment secretary in 1990, he privatised the government Skillcentres. The workers were ordered not only to work for a private company called Astra, but also to surrender their Civil Service pensions and redundancy agreements in exchange for private ones. Among the many glowing promises made by Sir Norman was that the new pensions would be worth every bit as much as the old ones.

Three years later the company went into spectacular receivership with debts of £15m. The workers were left high and dry with small statutory redundancy payments. Four years later still, the pension fund is at least £11m under-funded. Jim Gault, who worked in the Skillcentres for 25 years, has just got his pension — less than half what he would have got in the civil service. He tells the *Eye*: "In 1990 we were told the future was secure. At our meeting last month we were told that future pensioners will probably get nothing at all from their years at Astra."

SNEAK OF THE WEEK

■ A LECTURER who complained to Tony Blair about her college management had her name passed to the college principal, and was threatened with serious disciplinary action.

Tony Blair visited Lewisham College, south London, shortly before Christmas last year to open the new Ruth Silver building which modestly takes its name from the college principal.

Before his visit, the lecturers' union NATFHE encouraged members at the college to phone Blair's office to protest about new contracts which increased teaching hours and reduced holidays; and about ELS, a private agency which hires out lecturers and thus saves the colleges the cost of basic employment rights (see *Eye* 918).

Two days after such a phone call, one Lewisham lecturer was surprised to be summoned before the principal and scolded for phoning Blair's office. She was even more surprised to hear that her conversation had been tape-recorded; that the tapes would be carefully listened to by the principal and that if a single word "brought the college into disrepute", she would be seriously disciplined.

Andrea Kenneally of NATFHE represented her colleague in the ensuing dispute. "The tapes never materialised," she told the *Eye*. "Blair's office insist they don't tape phone calls, because it's illegal. We don't know how her name came to be passed to her boss. I'm afraid you can't speak to the lecturer. She's been told that if she talks to the media or MPs, her job will be in danger."

SPOT THE DIFFERENCE (or Valley of the Lilley)

1) "Why do they come to scrounge off us? They certainly don't come here for the climate. Just imagine the advice you might find in a European phrase book for benefit tourists: 'Wo ist das hotel? — Where is the housing department? Ou est le Bureau de change? — Where do I cash my benefit cheque? Mio bambino e in Italia — send child benefit to Italy. Je suis un citoyen de Europe — give me benefits or I'll take you to the European Court. But next year's edition will have just one phrase: Ou est la Societe de something for nothing? — Sorry Jacques. Britain's branch is closed."

Peter Lilley, Secretary of State for Social Security, Tory party conference, 6 October 1993.

2) "We must not be anti-European or xenophobic, but pro-British."

Peter Lilley, MP, candidate for the Tory leadership, Evening Standard, *8 May 1997.*

You can write to Paul Foot at 6 Carlisle Street, London W1V 5RG, or leave a message for him on 0171 287 3183

In the City

"WHEN THE legend becomes the fact, print the legend" declares the newspaper editor at the end of John Ford's classic Western *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance*. This appears to be the principle upon which increasing numbers of under-inquisitive hacks approach the subject of Joe Lewis, the Bahamas-based currency trader who in three years, courtesy of the *Sunset Times* Rich List, has gone from nowhere to become Britain's richest man and a multi-billionaire.

Lacking the quality of information which backs up the valuations placed on rival billionaires such as the Sainsburys, Westons, Moores, Schroders, Bamfords or the Duke of Westminster, Rothermere and Branson — due to the wall of offshore mystery that surrounds the reclusive, publicity-shy Lewis — the *Sunset Times* and others rely on a series of ever escalating guesstimates.

That Joe Lewis is a very wealthy man is undoubted. He has the lifestyle, toys and investments to justify that rating. But a three time billionaire? A year ago the *Sunset Times* estimate was a mere billion, two years before that the small change of £200 million. His fortune has been made, we are told, from massive trading in currencies, trading at which Lewis, unlike the much better known billionaire trader George Soros (whose wealth also can be more accurately measured), never seems to lose — if the endlessly repeated unofficial version is to be believed! Much of the basis for the £3 billion seems to be that American banks extend Lewis credit lines of up to twice that figure, presumably on the security of the Lewis assets or portfolio providing a margin of 10%. But once again evidence of this Soros-style trading is hard to come by.

Lewis first became a subject of press curiosity in 1994, when he took a major stake in art auctioneers Christie's. Since then the same figures and stories have been relentlessly recycled. One of the most regularly repeated tales about Lewis concerns his background as a highly successful caterer and retailer in London during the 1960s and 70s. Every profile records how, dismayed by Labour's tax policies, he sold out and became a millionaire tax exile in 1979 with a fortune which has escalated with every retelling. The *Sunset Times* last year estimated that fortune at £30 million — a figure that in 1979 was mega-money, equal perhaps to £150 million today.

Lewis gives no interviews and makes no comments on the legend. However, those who remember Lewis from those far-off London days express doubt about such huge sums — which is not surprising given the facts about his Hanover Grand group.

Lewis and his father ran one of the earliest theme restaurants in London, the Beefeater at the Tower of London, together with the Tavistock, Hanover Grand and Northumberland Grand banqueting rooms. Lewis expanded into a variety of services geared to tourism including coaches and shops. He was also involved in property.

In 1973 the catering and coach group was injected into a listed "shell" company which owned a Blackpool hotel. But this was a shortlived success story. Following the 70s stock market crash the outside shareholders were bought out in 1975 for 8p a share, valuing the Hanover Grand group at about £400,000. Hanover Grand the public company then became a subsidiary of a private company called Kirkstar Securities which changed its name to Hanover Grand Holdings. Swapping of Hanover Grand names was to become a feature of Lewis companies.

The going private was viewed by some who knew Lewis at the time, and who had been shareholders in the public company, as something of a rescue operation. It seems to have been helped by rag trade businessman Jack Grant, who was a millionaire when that meant something. Grant is never mentioned in the published version of the Lewis legend.

Although Lewis was a director of the private Hanover Grand Holdings, he did not appear as a shareholder and declared no interest in its shares. These were initially held equally by Grant and a Panamanian company, International Travel & Tours Operations. Grant transferred shares to ITTO in 1977. A year later the Panamanian company owned all the shares although neither Lewis or Grant claimed to have any disclosable interest before they resigned in 1981.

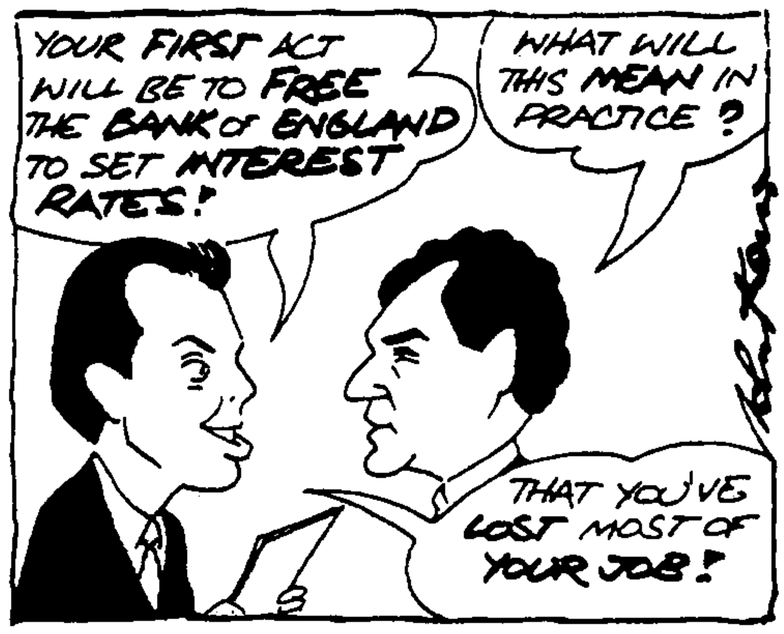
So this was the situation in 1979 when, legend has it, Lewis sold out and went into tax exile. There appears little evidence of any "sale" in 1979. Indeed all that appears to happen between 1976, when the group went private, and 1982, when Hanover Grand Holdings ceased trading, was a shuffling of shares from onshore to offshore — by 1981 half the shares were owned by a Swiss company.

The same pattern is revealed in Hanover Grand Ltd, which owned the catering, coach and retail subsidiaries. It continued to list first Hanover Grand Holdings, then ITTO, then Hanover Grand Holdings again as its ultimate parent company, with one share always held by Joe Lewis. In 1984 this nominal share passed to his father Charles, who died three years later, after which the company was wound-up. So any "sale" appears to have still resulted in a continuing Lewis connection. So just who it was that Lewis sold out to in 1979 remains a mystery protected behind the owners of ITTO and its Swiss partner Viajes Fuji Continental.

Furthermore, far from leaving Britain in 1979 as a tax exile, Joe Lewis not only continued to be a director of the Hanover Grand companies until 1981, two years after Labour went into political exile, but he continued to show an address in London until 1982. After that he gave his address as Marbella from where he migrated to the Bahamas in the mid-80s.

Who if anyone other than offshore trust interests linked to Lewis and Grant bought Hanover Grand remains uncertain and there is little evidence of any such sale taking place in 1979. How such confusions arise must be a cause of embarrassment to Lewis.

Similarly puzzling is the claim that the Hanover Grand sale made Lewis a multi-millionaire. Group turnover grew from £4.6 million in 1976 to £7.5 million by 1979 before going into decline. Profits were on the slide from 1977 when they hit £294,000. By 1979 there was a £214,000 loss which increased to £380,000 the following year. Hardly figures to inspire £30 million price tags, especially when the main operating companies listed assets of £1.3 million! The Hanover Grand subsidiaries in London were sold off in 1984 after three years of steady losses and the group ceased trading. Proceeds of the sale — £1.75 million.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This still left the more successful Hanover Grand/Euro-Asia retailing companies in Germany, Austria and Switzerland which continued to be controlled mainly by offshore companies in Panama but with Charles Lewis often as the sole director in Britain. Soon after he died these were sold off in 1987 to the PML Group. But that is another under-reported side of the Joe Lewis story.

Nothing was too good for the man who shot Liberty Valance — even if he didn't. And nothing is too unbelievable about the wealth of Joe Lewis — even if there appears more myth than fact about the origins of his undoubted fortune.

FOLLOWERS OF would be stock market sage Bob Beckman, the man others bet against and win, will be amused to learn he also got it wrong when it came to avoiding tax on his investment activities which included the *Investors Bulletin* newsletter.

Beckman bragged that his dog made tax free capital gains. This and his high profile attracted the attention of the Inland Revenue's Special Office investigators around 1985. After a long running debate Beckman/*Investors Bulletin* ended up settling with the Revenue for at least £500,000. A good reason to move to Monte Carlo — perhaps a move he should have forecast as necessary somewhat earlier.

DESPITE LABOUR landslides, lawyer David Mills, whose wife is better known as Labour MP Tessa Jowell, is said to be a worried man and not just because of all the work he did on former Italian prime minister Silvio Berlusconi's offshore companies. This has already brought him into the frame for the Serious Farce Office and the Italian authorities who are greatly interested in Berlusconi's tax affairs. But it seems that the authorities in Britain may also have more than a passing interest in certain companies administered by Mills and the movement of their funds. Doubtless Mills and his redoubtable lawyer David Kirk who was shortlisted for the SFO top job that went to Ros Wright, will have all the answers to refute any misconceived allegations. Something that will come as a great relief to the new Labour Attorney-General John Morris, who now has responsibility for the SFO.

'Slicker'– "New Labour, New Scandals"

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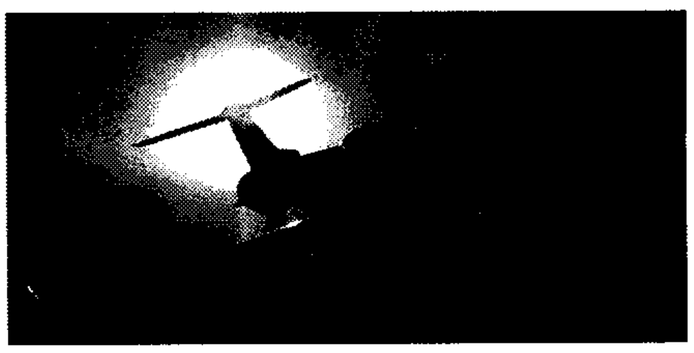

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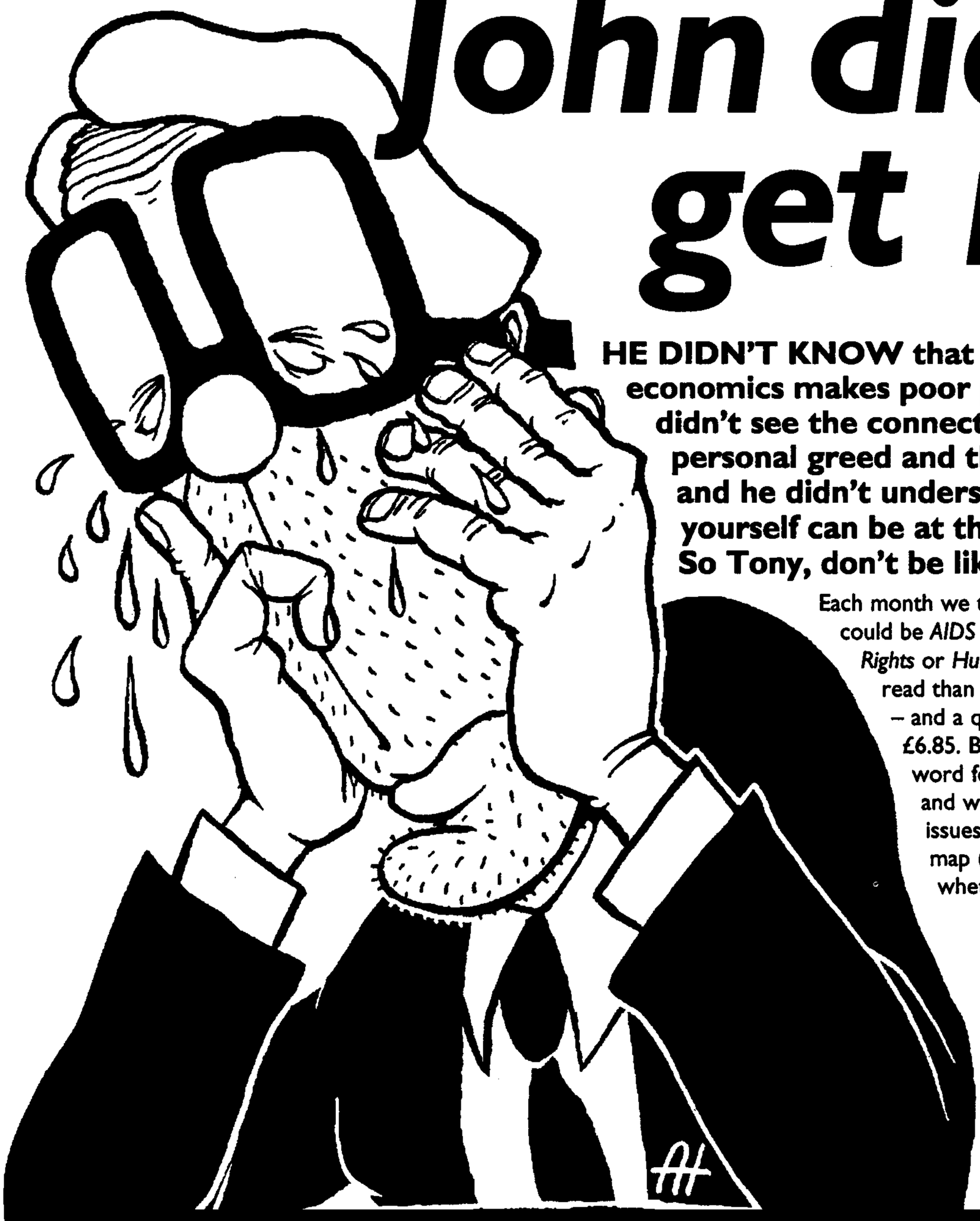

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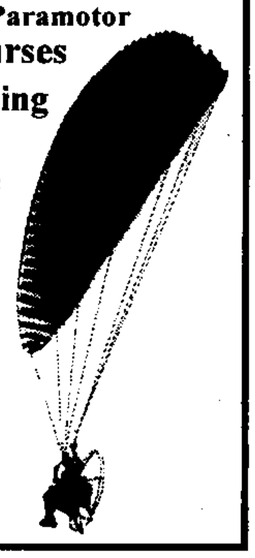

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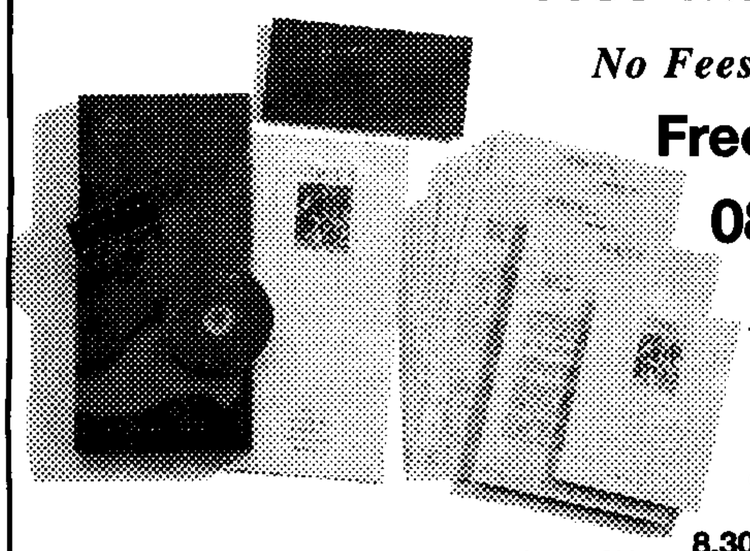

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QUOTE

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FORTEAN TIMES

EYE SAY

ORANGE — are you (like me) a SERIOUSLY DISSATISFIED CUSTOMER? I believe that sometimes a very futile exercise is required to get people's attention. Therefore I intend to hire a steam roller and ROLL OVER MY PHONE outside Orange's HQ in Bristol. If you would like to join the fun, please contact me at Box 0124. All TV camera crews, journalists, etc welcome. Remember Network? I'm not gonna take it any more!!! — PETER FINCH.

STEPHEN & CONSTANCE met (through an Eye Love ad) on 6 May 1993. Who ever loved, that loved not at first sight?

THE BASTARDS! See Eye Hear.

MAKE FRIENDS in AMERICA — See EYE CONTACT

SPEECHWRITING by MITCH MURRAY. See Page 30.

EYE NOVELTIES

SPECIALITY DOGGIE Treats — Valentine Bakers & Confectioners. Tel/fax: 0181 292 1273.

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SPEECHWRITING by MITCH MURRAY — See page 30.

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TALL, SLIM, mid-40s, successful businessman in celibate marriage is seeking long-term relationship with attractive lady in similar position looking for affection, warmth and loving soulmate. Discretion assured. It's time to find that special person. Write now. Photo please. Box 1124.

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SLIM, SINGLE MALE, 5'7", seeks slim(ish) lady partner for bareback riding. Discretion if needed. (Lancs.) Box 1324.

IMPOSS. IN GLOS? Tied yet free, comely intelligent humorous woman, 50+, seeks funny, thinking, non-sporting man for rapport, badinagé, laughter, platonic friendship. Photo please. Box 1424.

PRETTY WILTSHIRE rose, 35, 5'4", shy, slender, seeks n/s thoughtful gardener. Photo please. Box 1524.

PERSONABLE, open-minded grad. male, early 40s, seeks sexy fun. Will travel. Frank letter please. Box 1624.

RECKLESS SKINHEAD with wealth, style and class seeks woman (age to 35) for dangerous affair (London/S. East). Box 1924.

ATTRACTIVE, CREATIVE, professional male, 29, likes cinema, music, eating out, travel, seeks female 24-34 for love, laughs and lost weekends. Berks/London. Box 1724.

BOOKISH LIBRAN lad, 51, seeks slim, tactile n/s woman for quiet London mischief. Photo helps. ALA. Box 1824.

OTHERWISE HAPPILY married man (43) seeks sympathetic female to help rekindle those parts that spouses seldom reach. NW3. Box 2024.

THE LYGON ARMS hotel in the Cotswolds is the perfect setting for an affair according to "The Times". This mid-thirties over-worked millionaire, genuine nice guy, would like to find out. Box 2424.

SENSUAL RUBENESQUE dark-skinned med woman (28) loves theatre, movies, cafes, indiealt, mutual pampering — seeks attractive, professional unattached soulmate (ns). Photo/Tel No. London. Box 2124.

FANCY A BIT on the side? Married man not getting it at home seeks wicked woman with an urge for more. London. Box 2224.

THADDEUS SEEKS Juanita. Box 2324.

REASONABLY ATTRACTIVE male, intelligent, wealthy, caring but dominant seeks compatible female for wining, dining and mutual interests. London. Box 2021.

TRIM BLONDE epicurean thirty-something needs partner for occasional indulgence. London. Box 2624.

EUNUCH MATURE EDUC seeks harem girl to serve, amuse. Gloater welcome. Box 3323.

MIDLANDS MAN, 42, slim, balding, specs, intelligent, seeks sincere sensual lady soulmate. Age unimportant. Box 2724.

GIN-SWILLING, fag-smoking, music-loving, fit as fuck: two girlies, 28, seek similarly misunderstood males. Box 3623.

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SUBMISSIVE FEMALE sought — Cheshire. Box 1022.

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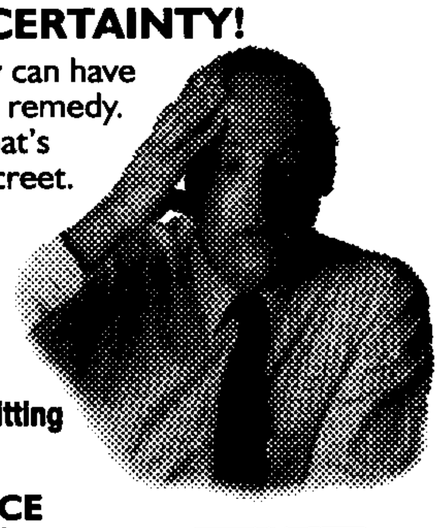

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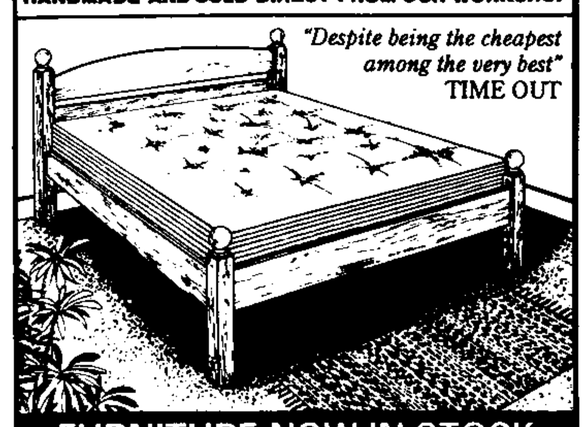

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2. Personal Information

Marital Status: Single ❒ Divorced ❒
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Age:_____ Height:_____

Occupation:_____

Religion:_____

Build: slight ❒ medium ❒ large ❒

Attractiveness:

Very attractive ❒ Attractive ❒ Average ❒

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3. Education

Private / Public ❒ Grammar ❒
Comprehensive ❒
Secondary Modern ❒

O Levels / GCSE's ❒ A levels ❒
Further Education ❒
University / Professional Equivalent ❒
Technical Qualification ❒

4. Your Personality

(tick which traits closely describe you)

❒ Affectionate ❒ Fashionable
❒ Serious ❒ Practical
❒ Considerate ❒ Conventional
❒ Shy ❒ Reliable
❒ Romantic ❒ Adventurous

5. Your Attitudes

(tick for yes, cross for no or leave blank if you don't feel strongly)

❒ Do you prefer town life?
❒ Do you involve yourself with community activities?
❒ Do you have many friends of your own sex?
❒ Are you interested in current affairs?
❒ Are you looking for one special relationship?
❒ Do you like team activities?
❒ Does your work make it difficult to meet new people?
❒ Do you feel resentful when forced to act quickly?
❒ Do you want to extend your social life as well as finding a special relationship?
❒ Do you devote a lot of time to your social life?

6. Your interests

(sections 6. and 7. Please tick for a liking, cross for a dislike or leave blank for no pref.)

❒ Wining/Dining ❒ Jazz/Folk music
❒ Pubs ❒ Classical music
❒ Sports/Keep fit ❒ Theatre/Arts
❒ Entertaining ❒ Watching TV
❒ Reading ❒ Smoking
❒ Travelling ❒ Mixing with friends
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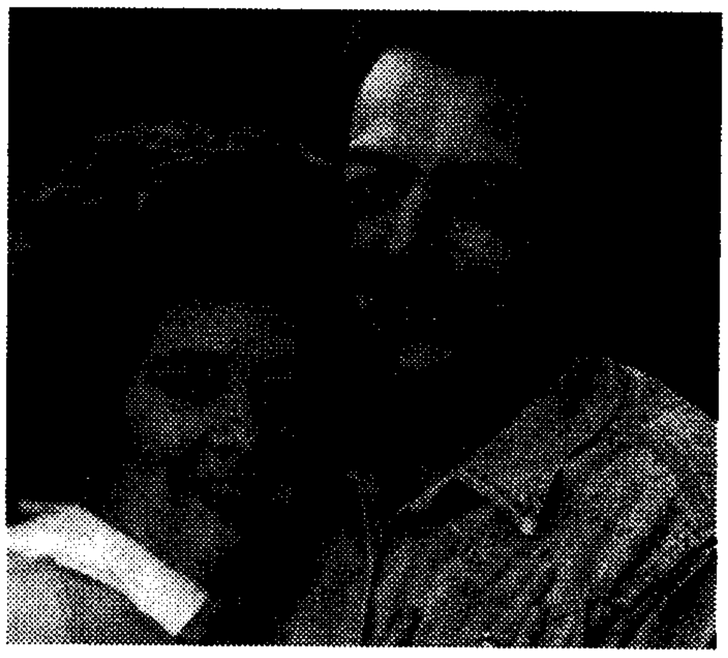

7. Details of the partner you would like:

Minimum age:_____ Maximum age:_____

Height: min._____ max._____ Don't mind ❒

Marital status: Single ❒ Divorced ❒
Widowed ❒ Separated ❒
Don't mind ❒

Build: slight ❒ medium ❒ large ❒

Attractiveness:

Very attractive ❒ Attractive ❒ Average ❒

Dept. PE 63

Please answer the questions above, cut out this page and send it to us at Dateline 23 Abingdon Road, London W8 6AL *or call us now on (01869) 324 100*

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